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STAR WARS INSIDER

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Interview

Gunships
& Gondolas

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VEHICLES
of Episode II

Emissary of the Void
The Final Chapter

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DARK HORSE ON *JEDI*

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Introducing the all-new *Star Wars* Fan Club newsletter *Bantha Tracks*. Turn to page 69 to find out how you can become a Fan Club member.



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THE STAR WARS EXPERIENCE



You say you like *Star Wars*, and then some wet blanket tells you, "It's only a movie."

That line has never been more false than in the case of *Star Wars*. Even on the face of it, *Star Wars* is obviously five movies—so far—and that's not even counting the TV movies. As fans know, however, the adventures continue in books, comics, electronic and roleplaying games, and even on the once and future *Star Tours*.

Beyond the world of fiction, *Star Wars* persists in collectibles ranging from LEGO models to cookie jars, from wristwatches to remote-controlled droids, from action figures to art books, sculptures, and even pajamas. Devote enough time to the pursuit, and you could fill your home with *Star Wars* décor—as the president of our Fan Club has done.

Yet, beyond the films, the *Expanded Universe* of fiction, and all the toys, there is one greater element of *Star Wars* fandom.

The *Star Wars* community is what gives a fan his power. It's an energy field created by all living fans... Ahem. It's the power that causes us to start quoting from the movies when what we really mean to say is that the best part is the shared experience, the sense of belonging to a big group of people who love the same thing.

That's not to say that all fans are alike. Even here in the *Insider* office, we have all kinds of fan. One guy wears a *Star Wars* T-shirt to work every damned day (thankfully, he has hundreds of them). Another is a cutthroat trading card game player, while another is a big fan of the movie-making process. One woman composes Jedi folk songs, while another harbors a Han Solo obsession best not described in a family magazine.

As a *Star Wars Insider* reader, you could be any sort of fan. Maybe you make your own costumes or build action-figure-scale starships. Maybe you stood in line for days (or weeks, or months) to see a *Star Wars* movie. Perhaps these days you help your kids with their own *Star Wars* art projects for school.

No matter what kind of fan you are, there's a place for you in the Official *Star Wars* Fan Club. This magazine is only one of the benefits you'll receive when you subscribe. Now, you'll also receive a letter from George Lucas, a gorgeous membership card, *Star Wars* travel postcards and stickers, and a groovy *Attack of the Clones* mini-standee. Best of all, you'll also receive the quarterly *Bantha Tracks* newsletter in an exclusive, members-only edition of *Star Wars Insider*. Within its pages, you'll see more coverage of fans—many of them just like you—as well as club activities at conventions, costume contests, and local gatherings.

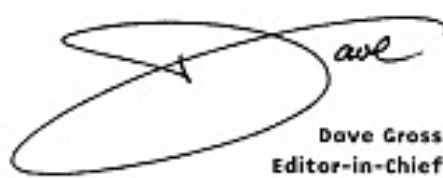
In fact, if you're already a member, then you can see *Bantha Tracks* on the flip side of this very issue. If not, then now's a great time to join by using the subscription card in this issue or visiting www.palzipublishing.com.

So, you say you like *Star Wars*? Join the club.



photo by Joseph McDonald

Have you seen *Attack of the Clones* on film, via digital projection, on the gigantic IMAX screen, and on DVD or VHS in your home? What did you like best about each format? Turn to "Rebel Rumbings" on page 6 to find out how to send us your comments.


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REBEL RUMBLINGS



So, you've been watching *Attack of the Clones* on DVD every night for the past few weeks. We can't blame you for that, but now your eyes need a break from the tube, so we're here to save you from video blindness. No, no need to thank us. Just keep those cards and letters coming—especially the spiffy postcards and the dancing stormtrooper photos.

EYE-POPPING GOODNESS

I just received issue #62 and, like the Aayla Secura guy, my eyes bugged. Here's why: This summer MTV did a *Star Wars* special where I first heard of the forms of lightsaber battle. Then I saw *Clones* many times. So I was wondering which form Yoda utilized—I even wrote a letter that never made it to mail; you beat me to the punch! Now your skills are complete.

As for my favorite episodes, they are, in order: *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Attack of the Clones*, *A New Hope* and *Return of the Jedi* (tie), and *The Phantom Menace*.

Favorite *Clones* battle: (they were all good) Yoda vs. Dooku.

Favorite *Clones* line: "Why do I get the feeling you're going to be the death of me?"

May the Force be with you,

GEORGE AGAYOFF
 Saco, ME

64

He's a man of action and few words—which is probably a good thing, since the less he says, the more you can trust him. "From a certain point of view" indeed!

KEEP 'EM SEPARATED

I just finished the article on the seven forms of Jedi Saber combat, and wow! My kids are now fighting over who gets to read it next. These kind of wonderful, in-depth articles are why I subscribe to *Star Wars Insider*. If this is a

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 93

DON'T STEP ON HIS WHITE SUEDE SHOES

Just responding to your call for dancing stormtroopers. I might be a little late for this, but thought I'd send pics anyhow. The first, with my helmet on, is of me at a Halloween party at a small club. The second is of me, the Elvis Trooper, at San Diego Comic Con 2000, dancing with the girls from *Newtype* magazine.



KEN TARLETON, TK-4321
 Central, CA
www.thestormtroopers.com




It's never too late to send us your photos of dancing stormtroopers. But honestly, Ken, would it kill you to take a few lessons? We want to see something more along the lines of the Lindy Hop next time, or at least some ballroom. Considering your color scheme, black tie isn't too much to ask, is it?

WANNA RUMBLE?

Write to: **REBEL RUMBLINGS**, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007, or e-mail swinsider@palzopublishing.com. Letters may be edited for clarity and space considerations. All mail MUST include your full name and home city. *Star Wars Insider* is not responsible for any unsolicited material received. All material sent to "Rebel Rumbings" becomes the property of Lucasfilm, Ltd. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not possible.

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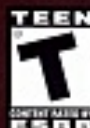
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PREQUEL

Rick McCallum Talks Costumes, Sets—and Earthquakes and

Rick McCallum, Producer of *Star Wars: Episode III Attack of the Clones*, brings us up to date on Episode III.



**That's the reality
I have to work under.
That's the challenge for
all of us—not to lose
our minds before
we get it.**

In early October, the *Insider* caught up with Producer Rick McCallum during a brief lull in his whirlwind of activity. Despite his propensity to behave like a perpetual motion machine, McCallum found a few minutes to update us on the status of the ultimate installment of the *Star Wars* saga.

"We're really moving now," he says.

"I just did a round-the-world trip," he adds. "I finalized the deal at the studio in Sydney. We met some new crewmembers who will be joining us, including a new set decorator, Richard Rogers. Peter Russell, our Art Director, has already started, but the main bulk of the team will begin in January."

While McCallum takes care of business and assembles the rest of the crew, the concept designers are hard at work designing the worlds of Episode III—and by the time you read these words, those images will be leaping into action. "We've got our animatics artists starting to work soon. As soon as they finish [another project] over

the next four to eight weeks, then they'll start working on the first of the action sequences for Episode III. Then the pedal will be to the metal all the way through the time we start shooting."

All of this work proceeds without a finished script, but that little detail doesn't stop the veteran producer. "Obviously," he says, "I would give anything in the world to have the script. But I don't have it. That's the reality I have to work under. That's the challenge for all of us—not to lose our minds before we get it."

Costumes

When we called, McCallum had just wrapped up a meeting with Costume Designer Trisha Biggar, a veteran who has worked with Lucasfilm for about ten years. Along with concept designer Iain McCaig, Biggar has been hard at work creating costumes for the galaxy far, far away.

The costume department begins work in mid-November in Sydney, Australia. There they will begin to create the many costumes required for Episode III. Until then, McCallum must work out the details of acquiring the necessary equipment, securing a place to work, and of course hiring the cutters. "It's a big deal," he says. "We'll probably make another 1,200 costumes, so it's a serious operation."

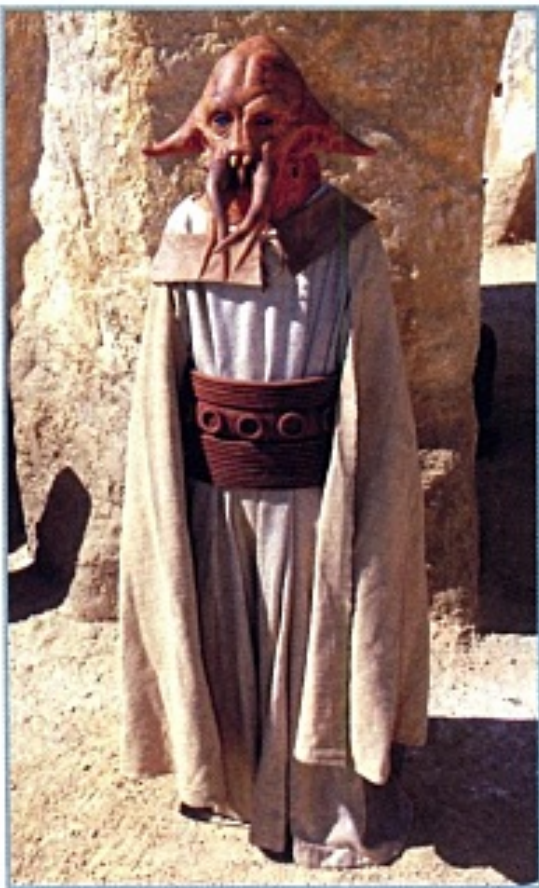
"George has approved about ten of them," says McCallum. Fortunately, not every one of those 1,200 costumes needs approval from George Lucas. He consults only on those designated for the principal characters—especially Padmé Amidala, whose fantastic wardrobe nearly qualifies as a world all by itself. While the costumers must be prepared to make new costumes and alterations for other characters, those for Padmé and the other main characters won't



UPDATE₆₄

Whirlwinds and Floods

by Dave Gross



change much after approval. "There are only a few right now," says McCallum, "but they're complicated things, and they'll take a couple months to make."

The hard part comes during scenes that require many extras, each of whom needs a costume. "That's always in the last crunch. How many people in the street scene? How many people in the background do we see in this particular shot? Sometimes that changes. George is very, very good. He understand the process completely and knows what our limitations are, so he always gives us enough advance warning."

To save on time, sometimes the costumers create outfits before the extras who will wear

Indy 4 Update

Fans have been abuzz with rumors about the start date of the fourth Indiana Jones movie. When Harrison Ford mentioned a few months ago that filming could start as early as next summer, we asked McCallum.

We could use more problems like that one.

"That's what the plan is. Hopefully, the film will be completed by 2005." He noted that the plan is dependent on getting a screenplay that everyone likes.

Fans who worry that a second Lucasfilm production might distract from Episode III have nothing to fear.

"Steven Spielberg is directing," reports McCallum, "and Frank [Marshall] is producing, so even though George will have written the story for it—the screenplay is being written by Frank Darabont now—we'll be making *Star Wars*, so we're locked away, basically, and they'll go ahead and make *Indy*."

Considering the prospect of both an Indiana Jones and a *Star Wars* movie coming out in 2005, McCallum remarked, "I think it would be a wonderful summer for Lucasfilm. They'd be separated by enough time that they won't compete directly with other."



them have been cast. "Then we'll limit the search for someone who's 5'7" or 5'10" or who can fit into that costume. But we also cast every single extra, so it's not like a cattle call where we call up an agency and say we want thirty people. But if it's extreme distance photography where somebody's really, truly in the background just walking left to right or right to left across the scene, then obviously we're more interested in the overall look than in the specific person."

After filming, Lucasfilm retains all of the costumes, from Anakin's leather jerkin down to the robes on Alien Extra #412. "First of all, they're all meticulously cleaned, because if you're out in the desert for ten days wearing the costume, it can get pretty funky. And then we have special boxes with insulation and their own humidity control. They're all stored, and then they're shipped back to Skywalker Ranch. They're catalogued, they're photographed, they're converted to images on a computer so we know where they are—we can find them instantly. Our props, set dressing, and

wardrobe storage is beginning to look like the last shot of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

That storage area is filled with about 2,400 costumes, and that's just for Episodes I and II. The costumes from the original trilogy have been restored and are treated even more as museum pieces. "The Wookiee costumes and items like that have to be maintained all the time. They have to do with glue and fake hair. They're brittle. Those are assets to us," explains McCallum, "and I'm not talking financial. They're the company's legacy, and we spend a great deal of time making sure they're stored properly under the right conditions and that they're taken care of and have great security."

Set Pieces

While Trisha Biggar oversees the earliest costume creation, Production Designer Gavin Bocquet has another big task to face. Bocquet recently visited Skywalker Ranch to confer with McCallum and the other filmmakers, and now he's off to work on two new vehicles at Elstree Studios. McCallum says, "Gavin's job is

to make everything that Erik Tiemens and Ryan Church work on in the conceptual stage become reality."

Even this early in production, says McCallum, "He's got lots of planets and vehicles. Remember, everything has to be designed in a *Star Wars* world. Once you have a look at a planet, then you have to create its own culture, its technology, its look, its costumes, its vehicles, what the props look like, what kinds of houses people live in. When you have a lot of planets, it's a very serious amount of work. Sometimes, this is stuff that'll never be in a movie, but you have to have the logic of each planet pretty well settled so everyone understands it."

Unlike costumes, which are easy to transport, sets are created in various locations depending on conditions. "It just depends on where we are," says McCallum. "In Tunisia we built the sets right in the desert. Sometimes it's more efficient, if they're more complicated sets, to build them on a stage or warehouse or gymnasium and then ship them by truck to the location, depending on what kind of facilities you have. In Tunisia, we built an infrastructure. We had a little hospital; we had a canteen; we had toilets; we had water. Everything had to be brought in. We had two shifts of people working for ten or twelve hours, and then another shift would come on, and then another shift would come on. We had to build sort of a military camp, so it was much easier to build the set on location."

"If you're in a city, you may not have access to the space that you need, and you only need a portion of the reality of a place, so it's easier to build those at a studio or a warehouse depending on where you are, and then bring those

over and set them up very quickly, shoot and get out and strike. You don't have to tie up a business for a couple days when you can get it done in a half day or a full day."

Considering just how many pieces of sets it takes to create a *Star Wars* scene, it's surprising to learn that none of them has ever gone astray during transport. "We're pretty good," explains McCallum. "We've had the same group of people working together for so long that everybody is very conscientious. We know how valuable that stuff is."

That's not to say that bits from *Star Wars* haven't been left behind from time to time. "When we were doing original location scouts for Episode I, back in 1995, Gavin Bocquet and I were walking around Tunisia, and we saw sections of the set from the original film that were domes made out of fiberglass and had been turned upside-down and were now washing machines or little swimming pools filled up with rainwater. The old cantina door was the door to a chicken coop. Amazing stuff happens when you go back years later."

More important to McCallum is the change in people who witness the creation of a movie near their homes. "For most people, watching a film being made is almost incomprehensible. It also brings a whole change of attitude toward those who make films. When you see somebody working for thirteen or fourteen hours just to achieve thirty, forty, or fifty seconds of film, people begin to respect the process of



making film. They realize it's not all sunshine and autographs."

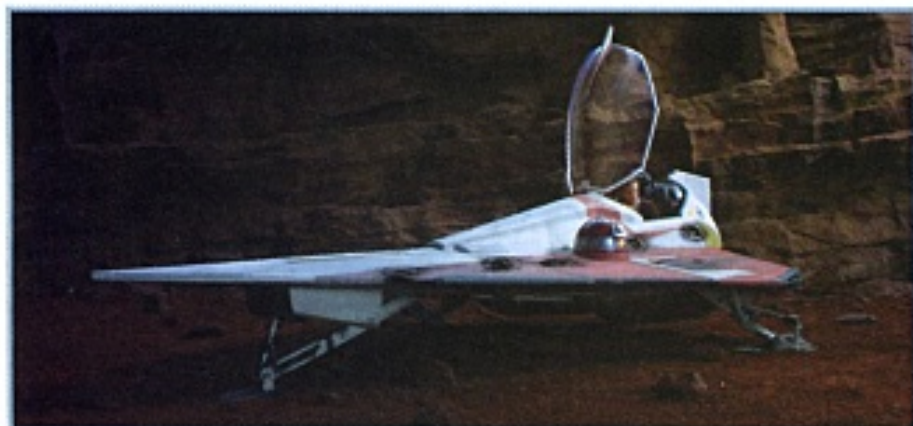
Also, unlike costumes, the set pieces are rarely archived for later use. "We'll try to save sections of certain sets that are the most interesting, but it's very, very hard."

The set is far more vulnerable than the costumes, in general. "You're always fighting the elements. The single biggest part is usually in production design, whether it's in Tunisia and you're trying to build a virtual city, or whether you're on *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* and you're up in the mountains and there's an avalanche and half the sets you've built have been taken out, or you've been hit by a flood or a twister. Usually what is the most damaging is when [you lose] all the sets you built. When we were doing *Young Indy*, we were shooting in Fillmore [California] the night of a major earthquake, and virtually every one of the nineteen sets was destroyed."

"It was huge. We had had a call at 4:45 in the morning for our extras. We had 300 extras in an old orange-pulping factory in Fillmore. I think the earthquake was at like 4:32, and we had four busses of extras plus a lot of local people—about 150 people from the town that we were in—and had that happened fifteen minutes later, many could have died."

"It's scary."

As a man who loves location shooting for all the chaos it can bring, McCallum looks back on the near-disaster philosophically. "No matter where you go, it's like classic filmmaking history. You go to a desert and people say, 'You know, it hasn't rained here in thirty years.' And of course that's the day it rains." ☺



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FROM

THE WORLD

STAR NEWS 64

FROM THE WORLD OF LUCASFILM

by Benjamin Harper

Last Stop . . .

Star Wars: The Magic of Myth Makes One Final Appearance Down Under

» The *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth* exhibition of models, artworks, props, and costumes from the films has made it all the way to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia, the last stop on its world tour. The exhibit, which will run at the Powerhouse Museum until February 2, 2003, opened with a gala event on September 17, in which Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) hosted conversations with ILM master model maker Lorne Peterson and visual effects supervisor Ben Snow, a native Australian. Enthusiastic fans swarmed the museum, many in costume, and were greeted not only by Daniels, but also by the Powerhouse Museum Director, Kevin Fewster, and a 40-piece youth orchestra that performed at the opening events.

It's fitting that this is the final destination of the tour, which began at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C., because nothing could top this unique installation. Exclusive to the Powerhouse Museum are Episode III props, including Zam Wesell's and Anakin Skywalker's full-scale airspeeders, the

Geonosian execution cart, and a section of the Jedi Archives Library desks and Jedi busts used while filming at Fox Studios Australia. Costumes on display included Anakin's Padawan costume, Padmé's battle costume, and Zam Wesell's bounty hunter costume.

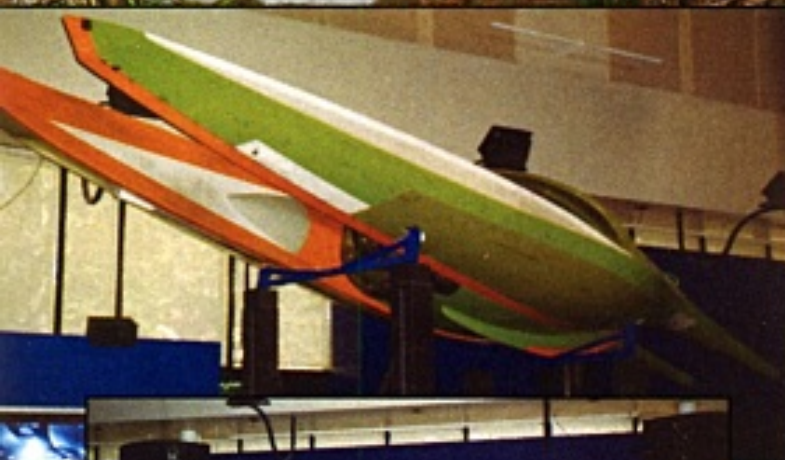
Ongoing activities throughout the exhibit's stay at the museum include a *Star Wars, Myths and Heroes* school holiday program. Children on vacation from school have the chance to participate in the world of myths and heroes through performances, activities, and workshops. They include seeing the How to Be a Hero Show, building their own *Star Wars* droids, competing to see who had the best Wookiee call, and creating their own Rebel pilot's helmet or Queen Amidala costume. Also, the Powerhouse Museum worked with starwarskids.com to come up with lots of interactive fun for children.

Within the exhibition space itself is a Knowledge Portal room. It houses perhaps one of the most exciting interactive experiences ever created—a chance to see yourself as Darth Vader. A 4' scale costume

[ABOVE] Lorne Peterson, Ben Snow, and Anthony Daniels visit the *Magic of Myth* exhibit at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia.



DOFLUCASFILM



was set up so that children (and adults) can place their faces in the mask, look at themselves in a mirror, and speak through a synthesizer set up in the mask that changes any person's voice to that of the Dark Lord—naturally, with the famous breathing included. Also included were several interactive computer stations that allowed children to help Watto's pit droids get to the Podraces, peek behind the scenes at the making of the *Star Wars* Trilogy Special Edition and *The Phantom Menace*, and pilot a Jedi Starfighter.

In their own galleries are even more interactive exhibits. The Powerhouse Museum created its very own Holocron. Touching the icons and buttons on the control panel shows information on different *Star Wars* characters and includes holograms of several *Star Wars* ships. In another gallery, patrons have the opportunity to levitate Luke's X-wing out of the Dagobah swamp. Yet another gallery contains replicas of various lightsabers used in the films—when approached, the lightsabers illuminate and play a scene from the battle in which they were used.

As if all that weren't enough, a monorail commuter train is decked out with *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth* images on its exterior. It sounds as if Sydney, Australia is the place to be if you're a *Star Wars* fan. ☺

Bay Area Business Council Salutes George Lucas . . . and So Does Carrie Fisher

The Bay Area Business Council, an association led by 21 of the top executives of the San Francisco Bay Area, inducted George Lucas into its Hall of Fame on September 12, 2002 at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Special Guest Carrie Fisher gave a speech in honor of George Lucas and two other inductees into the Hall of Fame, Hal Liney and Saul Zaentz.

"My name's Carrie, and I'm an alcoholic . . . wrong room!" was how the one-time Princess Leia started her speech at the organization's 57th Annual Dinner and Business Hall of Fame Induction. She stated somewhat gleefully that Lucas was one of the reasons that Los Angeles is becoming irrelevant by proving that it's possible to succeed in the film industry outside of L.A.

As Lucas addressed the audience, he commented on his strange trip into the world of business. "When I was about 19, there was a disagreement with my father, and he said 'You're going to come back and take over the store,' (he owned a small office supply store) and I said, 'No, I'm not going to come back. I swear to you, I know one thing. I will never, ever go into business. I will never, ever run a company.' I think this is the ultimate revenge for him."

Lucas explained why he came to the Bay Area. "We came up here with a dream to start a different kind of film industry—an industry that's based on respect and love for movies, a desire to have the quality of the work be the motivating factor in what we do."

He went on to address the impact the Bay Area has had on the film industry and its importance to the future of cinema as it moves from celluloid to full digital production. "It's the art form of the 21st century." ☺

STAR SIGHTINGS

64

by Benjamin Harper

» "You really have a way with women—way to go, Lando!" —Jeremy Aldridge as Chris, *StarGeeks*

EWAN MCGREGOR (Obi-Wan Kenobi) has done it again. On September 22, he was selected as Scottish Film star of the year at the Scottish People's Film Awards in Glasgow, Scotland. *Scotland Today* reported that stars from both film and television gathered at the event to celebrate Scotland's contribution to the film arts, and McGregor received the first award at the ceremony, mainly due to his recent roles in *Moulin Rouge* and *Attack of the Clones*. McGregor said of the event, "There's a strength of filmmaking in Scotland that feels like we're digging our heels in, so it's nice for a night to celebrate that."



In other Kenobi news, McGregor received a British Independent Film Award (BIFA) on October 30. He was honored with Variety's U.K. Personality Award. Variety's executive editor, Steven Gaydos, said, "No major U.K. star has toiled as actively in independent films as Ewan McGregor. It's our great pleasure to honor and celebrate Ewan's career at the BIFA awards, and it is also extremely meaningful for Variety to make a contribution in his name to Ewan's most special charity, Rachel House, Scotland's first children's hospice."

McGregor, cartoon style? *Animated Movies* (animated-movies.squareworld.com) reports that McGregor has been offered the lead in a CG-animated feature-length film entitled *Valiant*. Although McGregor isn't officially working on the project at the moment, should he take the part, he will be playing the role of Valiant, a wood pigeon who is a messenger homing bird for the Royal Air Force during World War II. Valiant apparently has some performance issues, but he comes out a hero after being sent on a mission to occupied France. Valiant will be the first animated feature from Vanguard Animation.

MARK HAMILL (Luke Skywalker) is in big demand these days. He's doing major voice work in a feature-length film and an exciting new video game. Hamill, who is known not only as a Jedi Master but also as the voice of the Joker in *Batman: The Animated Series* and The Larry 3000 in *Time Squad*, will take on the lead voice role in an independent, all-digital fantasy film called *AeroTroopers*. Hamill screened the movie's trailer at San Diego Comic-Con in August, 2002, and the audience reacted enthusiastically. "The animation is outstanding, and it has a great story and lots of action," said Hamill. "I think it will be a movie that audiences can enjoy." The story



sounds pretty original: In a world where enormous trees float free of gravity, creating tree-villages, lives a character named Joshua, who longs for adventure and excitement. Joshua builds a glider in anticipation of escaping his mundane world, but before he can take flight, a giant beast attacks and destroys his village. Joshua escapes, but he is the only survivor. He's rescued by the AeroShip, a giant space station, and is recruited as an AeroTrooper. He helps find and destroy the



creature that attacked his village. The film, which comes from Creative Light Entertainment and Nueart pictures, also features voice work from Billy West (*Futurama*, *Ren & Stimpy*) and Jess Hamill (*Animaniacs*).

In other voice work news, Hamill will be working on a new videogame from Activision that will make X-Men fans swoon with joy. Hamill is cast to play Wolverine in *X-Men: Wolverine's Revenge*. The game, available for PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube, is a third-person action-adventure game that lets players take control of Wolverine to do battle in the Marvel Universe. "After more than 300 comic books, an animated series, and a blockbuster feature film featuring the X-Men, Wolverine is the one character that grips the public's attention more than any of the other X-Men," said Larry Goldberg, executive vice president of Activision Worldwide Studios. The game features an original storyline by comic industry legend Larry Hama. Along with Mark Hamill, Patrick Stewart will contribute voice work as well. In the story, Wolverine has to find the antidote to a viral time bomb that's been discovered in his system. He's got 48 hours to find it, or he's history. The game arrives from Activision in Spring 2003.

According to *Variety*, **NATALIE PORTMAN** (Senator Padmé Amidala) is set to star in the directorial debut of *Scrubs* Zach Braff, who also stars and wrote the screenplay. After *Scrubs* goes on hiatus and



Portman finishes filming *Cold Mountain* in Spring 2003, shooting will begin on *Large's Ark*, a film about a man who's been estranged from his family for ten years but comes home for his mother's funeral. According to Braff, "He has lost every shred of who he was as a person, and the catalyst for his recovery is this young girl he meets when he returns." As you can guess, that girl is Natalie Portman. "I always thought Natalie Portman would be perfect, but I never imagined that she would actually say yes," Braff added.

YODA strikes back! The October 2002 issue of *Premiere* magazine compiled the best of everything film for the past 15 years. Yoda's appearance in *The Phantom Menace* was deemed "Most Welcome Comeback."

Anakin takes the challenge! *Entertainment Weekly* recently reported that **HAYDEN CHRISTENSEN** (Anakin Skywalker) joined USA Network's *Eco-Challenge*, which kicked off on October 11, 2002 in Fiji. Christensen teamed up with two siblings and a friend to compete against *Survivor* alumni. The program, which airs in April 2003, involves rappelling, mountain biking, and mountaineering, among other activities. The show's executive producer, Mark Burnett, insists that Christensen's celebrity won't merit him special treatment. "At the beginning, I'll get it over with and announce, 'Yeah, that's Hayden Christensen, he still bleeds and cries.'"

Ahoy, matey! According to IGN Filmforce (filmforce.ign.com), **KEIRA KNIGHTLEY** (Sabé) has been cast as the lead female character, Elizabeth Swann, in the upcoming Disney film, *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Knightley will play opposite Johnny Depp (*Edward Scissorhands*, *Cry-Baby*), Orlando Bloom (*Black Hawk Down*, *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*), and Geoffrey Rush (*Mystery Men*, *Shakespeare in Love*) in this film based on the swashbuckling ride at Disneyworld and Disneyland.

CHRISTOPHER LEE (Count Dooku) will star in the upcoming film, *The Riding of the Laddie*, directed by Robin Hardy. According to the *Internet Movie Database* (us.imdb.com), Lee will play the Town Magus. Vanessa Redgrave will play his wife, and Sean Astin also stars as the town preacher. Filming began in September 2002. ☺



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Just Like Snapple

The *Zagat Movie Guide*, released in September, lists *Star Wars* as the #3 movie of all time! The book, which follows the format found in other Zagat's guides, is a collection of the top 1,000 movies rated by 5,338 movie fans. Each film is scored for acting, story, production,



and overall quality. Unlike most top movie lists, Zagat gives the top spot not to *Citizen Kane* (#8) but to *The Godfather*. Coming in at #2 is *Casablanca*. ☺

But It's a Word!

At last you can defend your use of the term JEDI in Scrabble. The famous term is just one of the many new words adopted in the newest edition of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. Other entries include "Klingon," and "warp drive."

According to spokeswoman Claire Turner, words are chosen to be included in the dictionary after they've been used consistently for a

Jedi (jed•əi) *n.* Noble warriors who study the Force and use their powers to protect the galaxy from evil. —Lucasfilm

period of time. "Generally, a word has to be used five times in five different places over five years, although something like 'text messaging' got in quicker because it became so widely used so quickly," she said.

One fantasy word that didn't get in: "Muggle." *Harry Potter* fans will have to use that one for a few more years before it makes the grade. While we're at it, how about using "utinni!" in a sentence each day? ☺

Episode II Soundtrack Nominated



The Flanders Film Festival in London recently revealed its nominees for the annual World Soundtrack Awards, which were held October 19th in Ghent, Belgium. John Williams was nominated for Best Original Soundtrack for *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones*. ☺

20th Century Fox Busts a Summer Move

Thanks primarily to *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones* and Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report*, 20th Century Fox had a super summer. "Having a George Lucas *Star Wars* sequel followed by a Spielberg-Tom Cruise movie—that's pretty good. We were thrilled to release both of those films—individually, and back to back," stated Jim Gianopulos, co-chairman of Fox Filmed Entertainment.

Attack of the Clones grossed more than \$300 million domestically and will go on to do around \$650 million worldwide, the executive predicted. "When you consider our distribution, video, and theatrical input, it's a very profitable film," said Gianopulos. ☺



Area fans and the local chapter of the 801st legion helped dress up Sansweet's Seattle appearance this past July at FAO Schwarz.



Star Wars Collecting on the Road

Star Wars fans across the U.S. got to glimpse highlights of what might be the largest private *Star Wars* collection anywhere. Collector Steve Sansweet traveled to New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Seattle this past summer, meeting with fans in the *Star Wars* department at FAO Schwarz toy stores.

Sansweet showed the gathered fans slides of his impressive collection, sharing his love of the hobby he's enjoyed since 1977. He told stories about his many "hunts" for treasures, revealing that pieces in his collection are often cherished as much for their sentimental value as their monetary. At the end of each evening, Sansweet autographed copies of his books on *Star Wars* collectibles for fans. ☺

Seminar Examines Making of *Attack of the Clones*

A daylong seminar was held on October 5 in Hollywood, California, to show the public for the first time all of the planning, challenges, and lessons learned in creating a film using digital technology from beginning to end. *Attack of the Clones* Producer Rick McCallum keyed the event and discussed the issues involved with an entirely digital project. "Our goal for this event is to discuss the true story of how we made our movie," said McCallum. "We want to present the community with the issues that led us down digital pathways and share our view of the elegance of this digital process." Many other key people who worked on *Attack of the Clones* were present as well to discuss their aspects of the creation of the film, including production, post-production, visual effects, sound, and distribution. The seminar was held in the Entertainment Technology Center's Digital Cinema Laboratory, and was presented by the Center as well as the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers and the USC School of Cinema-TV. ☺

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Clones to the

IMAX

Star Wars Hits the Bigger Screen



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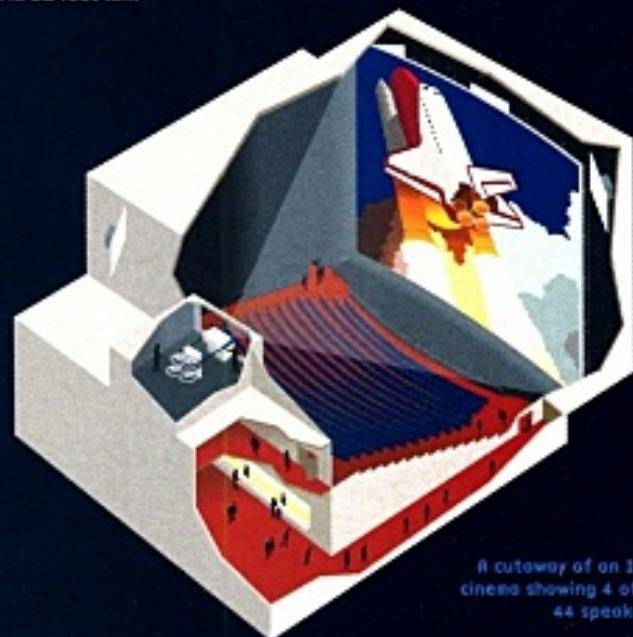
rom theatrical digital projection to home DVD systems that offer a sharp picture and digital 5.1 theater quality sound, every aspect of the way we view movies is evolving at an exhilarating pace. Back in 1977, when the first *Star Wars* film made its lasting impression on the world, many stood in around-the-block lines to get a chance to delight in what was an inherently theatrical experience. Even in those early days of analog Dolby Surround Sound, we knew that *Star Wars* would change the way we experienced movies. We felt the exhilaration as we jumped into hyperspace on the *Millennium Falcon* and wanted more than anything to leap into the screen and fight with our own lightsabers. Ever since that fateful moment, we've sought ways to relive the experience over and over again.

by David C. Fein



The key word is "experience." Before the multiplex assimilated most movie theaters and gave them postage-stamp screens crammed into closets, we often sought the ideal motion picture experience at the largest screen with the best available sound system. But the fall of 2002 brought a new hope. Months after its standard theatrical premiere, and weeks before the home video release, came the debut of *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones*—*The IMAX Experience*.

IMAX is a completely immersive theatrical presentation that offers flawless picture and sound designed to help you forget you're in a theater. Completely filling your field of view, the IMAX screens are up to eight stories tall and as wide as 120 feet. By comparison, Hollywood's largest screen—the Cinerama Dome—measures roughly 86 feet wide and 32 feet tall.



A cutaway of an IMAX cinema showing 4 of its 44 speakers.



IMAX projectors use a continuous film loop that winds the movie to a new reel, leaving it ready to be shown again without rewinding.

Additionally, IMAX has made great advances in reinventing the way films are projected. Their theaters employ an innovative "rolling loop" projection system that significantly improves focus and stabilization compared to a standard 35mm projector. The rolling loop system advances the film through the projector horizontally and smoothly along a drum as it travels through the projector, rather than having the film itself move through a vertical path on an average 35mm projector. The rolling loop, combined with IMAX's use of a 70mm frame—which is ten times the size of a standard 35mm frame—makes the increased stability and sharp focus essential to a presentation that feels natural and free of visual distractions.

As fans of *Star Wars* know, what you see is only half of the movie experience. IMAX Theaters are designed to reproduce motion picture soundtracks as closely as possible to the original mix. Each theater has forty-four speakers strategically positioned to give every audience member in every seat as ideal an audible presentation as possible. With the 12,000-watt amplifiers, speakers, and soundtrack all carefully in sync, IMAX delivers a clean, crisp, and powerful sound reproduction without any hint of distortion or imbalance no matter how intense or powerful the sound mix—and the sound and music in *Star Wars* are nothing less than *intense and powerful*.

Blowing Up the Clones

To prepare *Attack of the Clones* for its IMAX premiere, the technical wizards at the IMAX Corporation have employed their patented DMR (Digital Re-Mastering) process—just as they did for the first DMR release of *Apollo 13* in September—to enhance and convert the movie's picture and sound for IMAX presentation. Before the DMR process could begin, however, the film had to match IMAX programming requirements. Currently, most IMAX theaters operate with a strict running time limitation of 120 minutes, so *Attack of the Clones* needed to be shortened from its original 143-minute length.

The reason behind this change is strictly technical. An entire IMAX film is coiled neatly on a platter that allows the film to travel through the projector and re-spool onto another platter. IMAX theaters usually present films with a running time of no longer than one hour and are projected at 24 frames-per-second, the same frame-rate as a standard 35mm feature film. IMAX also shows films in high-speed, 48 frames-per-second presentations called IMAX HD. This faster frame-rate requires a platter large enough to hold a one-hour 48 frames-per-second feature

Didn't I see clips from *Star Wars* in IMAX before?

If you think that *Attack of the Clones* is the first time *Star Wars* was featured on the IMAX screen, you'd be surprised to discover that back in 1997 IMAX premiered an excellent documentary called *Special Effects: Anything Can Happen*. Filmed specifically for IMAX, *Special Effects* not only presented a rare insight into the art of special effects but also recreated some of filmmaking's greatest science fiction moments including the classic opening of *A New Hope*. If you thought that the *Star Destroyer* was huge before, it is massive on an IMAX screen. Directed by *Attack of the Clones* editor and *Star Wars* saga sound designer Ben Burtt, *Special Effects* took moviegoers on a unique adventure learning about how special effects are accomplished. *Special Effects* was so well received that it was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film. The theatrical experience of *Special Effects* whetted our appetites for *Star Wars* in IMAX. Finally, after five years we can finally see an entire *Star Wars* film in IMAX with *Attack of the Clones*.

or a two-hour 24 frames-per-second feature. While IMAX has plans to update the platters in the future to accommodate a 150-minute movie, most of their theaters can project only features 120 minutes or shorter. With the editing choices determined at Lucasfilm to enhance the IMAX experience while remaining true to the storyline, the DMR conversion could commence.

As part of the DMR process, the movie's aspect ratio had to be altered for presentation in IMAX. A film's aspect ratio is the actual projected shape of the frame. Since the theatrical release of *Attack of the Clones* was presented in the 2.35:1 widescreen format, and the IMAX screen is 1.4:1, an adjustment was necessary to maintain the creative integrity of the film while continuing to make the most of the IMAX format. Lucasfilm and IMAX settled on an aspect ratio of 1.7:1.

The next step in preparing the film was to enlarge the image using the IMAX DMR process. This process usually begins with the scanning of the

film into a computer, but because *Attack of the Clones* was photographed on high-definition video and augmented with digital effects, Lucasfilm sent the movie to IMAX in its original digital form at a resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 pixels per frame. When the film arrived it was transferred into the IMAX DMR computers, where it was inspected frame-by-frame to prepare, stabilize, and enlarge the image—to ten times the size of a 35mm film frame—for the new IMAX 70mm negative. As part of the preparation, the IMAX DMR process carefully balances enhancements to sharpness, brightness, and color to insure that the final master will be accurately reproduced on the screen when it runs through IMAX projectors. Once the DMR process has been completed, the movie is output to film through an IMAX laser film recorder at a digital resolution of 8,000 x 6,000. Even the movie's soundtrack was enhanced for the new venue. The IMAX DMR division presented Lucasfilm with the specifications of the IMAX theaters, and the soundtrack was remixed and reviewed for optimal presentation for these unique venues. The entire conversion process from digital projection master to IMAX master took thirteen weeks.

In the future, IMAX plans to premiere films in both conventional theaters and in IMAX theaters simultaneously. While digital projection and THX theaters continue to refine the conventional theatrical experience, IMAX continues to stand out for its reinvention of the experience and for re-introducing the "special event" presentation of a film.

The IMAX Experience brings the audience into the movie like never before. With massive screens and fewer distractions, IMAX is an ideal viewing environment for audiences who dream of entering the *Star Wars* galaxy. Now, with *Attack of the Clones*—The IMAX Experience, we can get one step closer to being completely swept away thanks to Lucasfilm's fantastic adventure and the awesome IMAX presentation. 🌌

Screen Comparison (Approximation)



IMAX GT Screen

The typical IMAX screen is eight stories—or 15 clone troopers—tall, over three times the height of a typical cinema screen.



35mm Screen

Film Format Comparison (Film Frame Actual Size)



IMAX 15/70mm

IMAX uses a special 70mm film print to achieve a high level of image clarity. Standard 35mm film is much smaller in comparison.



Standard 35mm



Computer Games Magazine (Editors' Choice)



Computer Gaming World (Editors' Choice)

95%

PC Gamer (Editors' Choice)



"Neverwinter Nights is the first game to implement the pen-and-paper game's 3rd Edition rules so well."

9.2 out of 10

Gamespot

"The DM client and tools elevate Neverwinter Nights into a creative medium of expression."

4.5 out of 5

Computer Gaming World

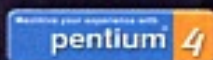
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The field of archaeology is all about learning to read the messages contained in human-made objects and answering the question, "What do they say about their creators?" The same approach works in the *Star Wars* galaxy, whether we explore the implications of various details within, or probe the technical magic behind the scenes.

GEON

BEHIND-THE-SCENES INFORMATION
STAR WARS UNIVERSE INFORMATION

KEY

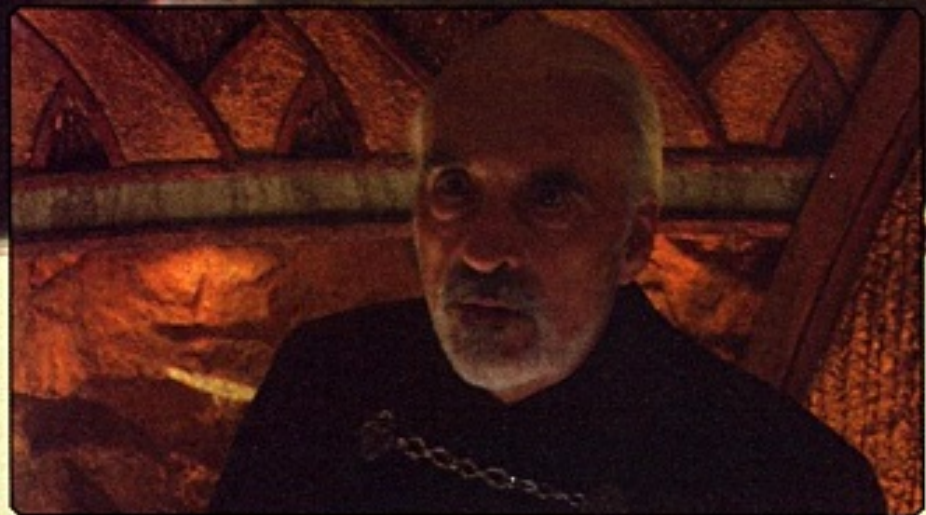
SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

Asid all the cinematic magic in the hands of George Lucas and his ILM visual effects wizards, in *Attack of the Clones* there are still continuities with classic fantasy filmmaking that go back to its earliest roots. In this scene, Lucas wanted to show hero Obi-Wan Kenobi held powerless as his antagonist offers him a chance to switch loyalties—a scene common in swash-buckling stories—but Lucas wanted to give the scene a *Star Wars* twist. So, instead of showing Obi-Wan conventionally chained, he had the character trapped in a levitation field. The production realized this novel effect with one of the oldest tricks in the stagehand's book: Lucas had Ewan McGregor hung by wires, attached to a rig worn underneath the actor's costume. "Wire work" has a long tradition in grand fantasy cinema, from the flying carpets of Douglas Fairbanks' *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924) to the fantastic leaping warriors of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). There's a certain charm in this old-fashioned technique, with its hallowed history, appearing alongside the most sophisticated visual effects imagery ever produced.



BATTLE OF WILLS

The short interval within the Geonasian cell is actually the scene of a critical battle in *Attack of the Clones*, a duel for the prize of a Jedi's power and loyalty. As Count Dooku slowly walks around the captive Obi-Wan Kenobi, he reminds Kenobi that his own Jedi mentor was Qui-Gon Jinn, Dooku's former Padawan. Jinn earned his reputation for independence to the point of defying the Jedi Council. Was there not wisdom in this freedom of thought, Dooku suggests? The two men exchange but few words, for the real battle of wills is going on beneath the surface. Dooku's outward grace and polite manner is a form of camouflage that disarms weaker opponents in mental battles. Through the Force, Dooku aggressively and masterfully probes Kenobi's spirit for points of weakness, carefully using truth as a weapon, since he knows Kenobi is Jedi-sensitive to lies. Obi-Wan is astonished at the power of Dooku's influence and can feel the Count's presence in his mind. Kenobi works furiously to maintain the walls of his resistance, yet the Count seems to melt them—Qui-Gon did go against the Council, there are problems with the Jedi leadership, the Republic is failing—all truth. Kenobi is trained to deal with deceivers, not with Force-empowered manipulators, and it takes all his will to maintain his control. He cannot find the strength to argue against the Count, so he focuses his energy on pure, blind resistance.



BY DAVID WEST REYNOLDS

GEONOSIAN PRISON

SMOKE & DIGITAL MIRRORS

The prison cell set in Australia was filled with smoke for an atmospheric effect, which also nicely symbolizes the haze through which Obi-Wan's clear judgment must penetrate to refuse Dooku's temptations. The smoke gave the setting a great look, but at the cost of real headaches for the ILM artists who had to digitally remove the wires suspending Ewan McGregor. Making wires disappear digitally is a trick that ILM has had down pat since it did the hoverboard chase sequence in *Back to the Future II* (1989), but for *Attack of the Clones* Lucas counted on ILM to be able to pick out wires not just from against a background but within smoke and haze. ILM also had to remove the wires' shadows, as they passed across Ewan McGregor's face—while perfectly preserving the smoke effect that passed in front of those shadows and the wires. Digitally reaching through smoke is pretty impressive—and no less difficult just because ILM makes it look easy.



MULTILEVEL SYMBOLISM

The wirework in this scene has more than mere technique in common with imaginative cinema's great traditions. Often in fantasy, the weight that holds us all down in the real world does not apply to heroes who can literally fly. The defiance of gravity in such situations represents freedom from restraint, and it is symbolic of the freedom of spirit that audiences have found inspiring in heroes since the earliest mythologies. So in *Star Wars* our Jedi leap and somersault through the air, and here even our hero in prison floats above the floor of his cell. The character of Obi-Wan looks down on Count Dooku, who tempts him to save himself by betraying his cause. Obi-Wan is resolutely above this temptation and will not be brought down to the Count's level—literally as well as figuratively.

CONTAINMENT FIELD

Tendrils of static electricity suffuse Obi-Wan Kenobi as he hangs in a Geonosian containment field designed to render dangerous prisoners entirely helpless. It is an effective design, derived from "magnetic bottle" technology used in Geonosian reactors. Hung by repulsor fields in mid-air, Kenobi has no chance of reaching any part of his cell to effect escape. Immobilized by the effects of the static field, Kenobi cannot move his body to focus the flow of the Force for kinetic effects, such as the manipulation of controls or the assault of a guard. And as Count Dooku knows, the nature of this extremely high-powered containment field is such as to reduce a prisoner's ability to use the Force by affecting the brain's ability to concentrate through electrical interference. This aspect of the field can cause weak individuals to lose all self-control, and it can help a skilled interrogator to get information even from defiant captives. The containment field is a costly and elaborate device unsuited to general incarceration purposes, but it is ideal for the probing of a Jedi's weaknesses.



More than any other members of a filmmaking team, actors command attention. Only a few directors can claim equal celebrity, among them George Lucas, yet few moviegoers could name even one visual effects artist—apart from the great Ray Harryhausen. With more and more movies including lavish visual effects, a few houses have become famous for consistently excellent work, none more so than Industrial Light & Magic. Behind that name stand 1,000 men and women, most of whom—despite their efforts garnering fourteen Academy Awards and contributing to seven of the top ten blockbuster movies of all time—have remained anonymous for their contributions to such movies as *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones*. That is, until someone left the door open and *Star Wars Insider* paid a visit to the Northern California offices of ILM, where we met a few of the filmmakers who conjure such astonishing images.

They might seem to have supernatural powers sometimes, but the members of ILM are not wizards. They are producers, artists, stage technicians, designers, animators, directors, camera operators, model makers, and—more often lately—actors who combine all of these talents with digital performances. Long known for pioneering advances in motion control cameras, optical compositing, and other movie technology, ILM was the first company to achieve convincing computer-generated characters in films like *The Abyss*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, and *Jurassic Park*. Animated characters like Jar Jar Binks, Watto, Dexter Jettster, the Kaminoans, and of course Master Yoda were simply the next step in a rapidly evolving art that begins—but does not end—with technology.

DREAMWEAVER

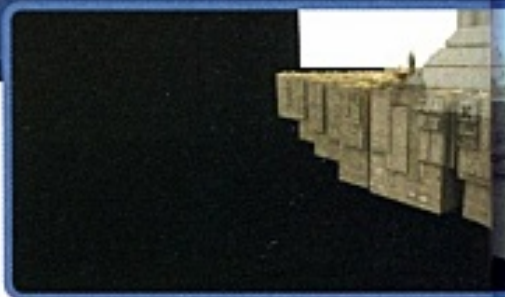
The People of Industrial Light & Magic

"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!" —The Wizard of Oz

The droid factory sequence shows off ILM's computer graphics mastery. Apart from the live-action shots of the principal actors captured against bluescreen, everything you see in these sequences is computer-generated—including Jango Fett when he arrives at the end of the scene.

vers

by Dave Gross



John Knoll: Rocket Man

As with most *Star Wars* movies, the very first shot in *Attack of the Clones* was born at ILM. Within a few seconds, keen-eyed viewers can spot a delightful "Easter Egg" as Senator Amidala's vessel approaches Coruscant. The first starship to leave the planet is the space plane from *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Visual Effects Supervisor John Knoll admits he had it put there to honor one of the films that most influenced him. If you didn't spot it the first five or six times you watched the movie, don't feel bad. "It's pretty small," says Knoll. "You've got to be careful when you do stuff like that not to be too obvious. We probably err on the side of making them too hard to spot."



No matter how small, that subtle tip of the hat points to one of the passions that led John Knoll to ILM: space exploration. Space travel, both real and fictional, has inspired Knoll all his life. "*2001* was a big influence on me," he says. "I was also a fan of the 1950s science-fiction stuff, *Forbidden Planet* and *When Worlds Collide*, those kinds of pictures."

What interested Knoll most about such movies were the special effects. "When I was a kid seeing movies like that, I was always fascinated with the

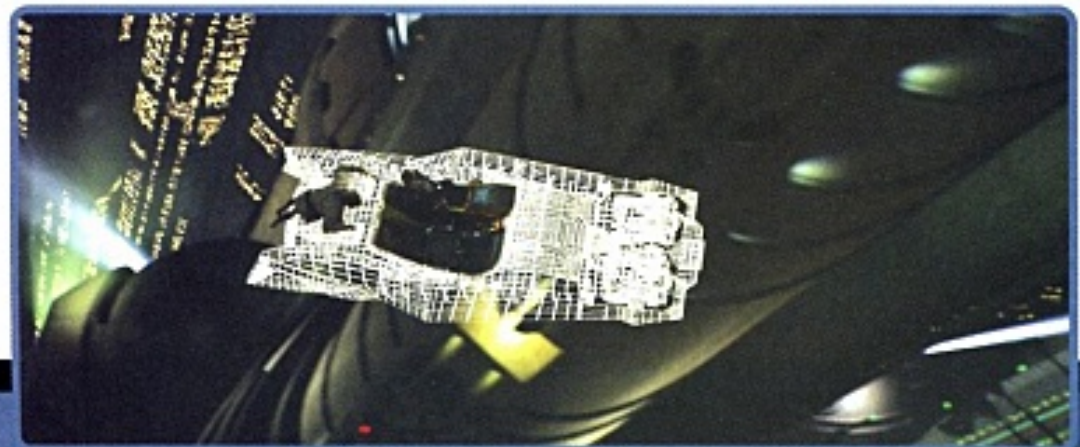
stuff they obviously couldn't have shot for real. It had to be manufactured some way. I would try to find out how they did that stuff by reading about how visual effects were done."

Knoll's hobbies were already a perfect fit for his interest in visual effects. "I built models. We had a dark room down in our basement, so I did some still photography. I made little stop-motion animation things in the garage. So I developed an interest in filmmaking and digital effects, but I didn't really think it was a practical career."

"When *Star Wars* came out, there was a lot more interest. Motion-control had been invented for *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters*. All these new techniques being used suddenly seemed a lot more exciting because there was so much more activity in the field. This was just as I was in high school and started to think seriously about what I was going to do after graduation."

At first, Knoll considered pursuing studies in architecture, but then a fateful trip changed his course. Accompanying his father on a business trip to Southern California, Knoll looked up ILM in the phone book and gave them a call. "I got hold of Grant McCune and said I was a model maker and I was interested in this kind of work, and he said, 'Well, come on down, then.' My dad drove me up from Anaheim to Van Nuys and dropped me off, and I got to spend pretty much the whole day. I went

"When I started at ILM, the job that I did for the first few years doesn't even





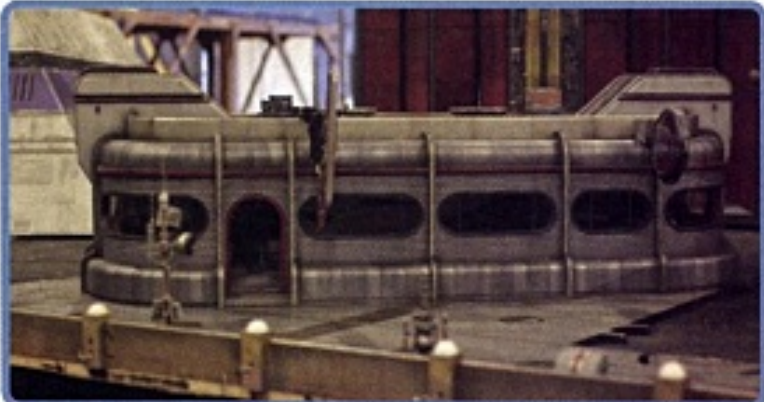
to dailies and saw these shots in progress, saw them shooting stuff out on the stage, went to the model shop and saw what they had under construction. That day had a big influence on me. It made the job that much more real. There were all these guys who came into work and built spaceships and all these cool things—and that was their job! I think I decided that day that this was what I was going to do.”

Despite helping create the celebrated Photoshop software with his brother, Knoll did not initially employ his computer skills in moviemaking. Instead, he found work as a model maker and camera operator. It was for the latter skill that ILM first hired Knoll in 1987. Since then, he has distinguished himself in films from *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* to *Deep Blue Sea*, and as Computer Graphics Project Designer he earned ILM's tenth Academy Award for Best Visual Effects for his work on *The Abyss*. For *Attack of the Clones*, Knoll served as one of four Visual Effects Supervisors.

More and more of the effects in films like *Attack of the Clones* are the result of computer animation, and some wonder whether the days of models are over. “I wouldn't call them dead yet,” cautions Knoll. “I think we built more models for Episode II than have probably ever been built for a feature film. There was also a lot of computer graphics, and that gets most of the attention. I think the model shop was at its absolute busiest when we were working on *Attack of the Clones*.”

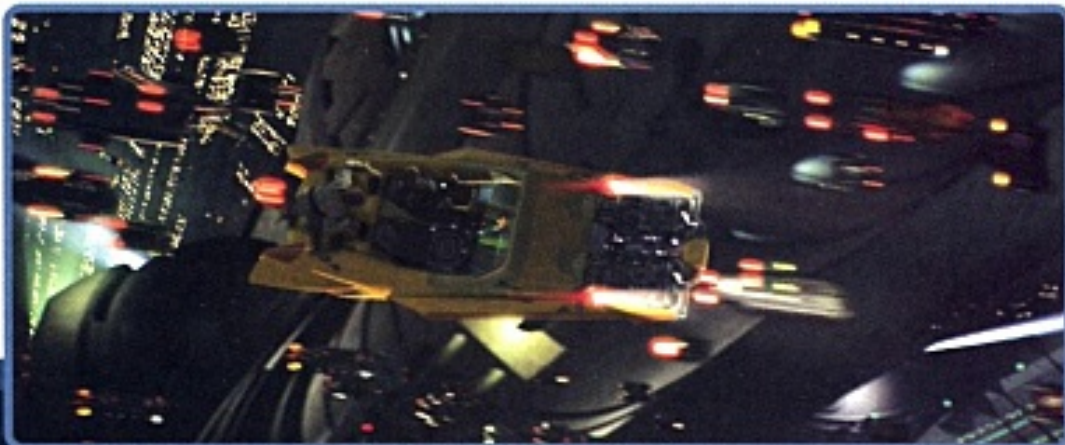
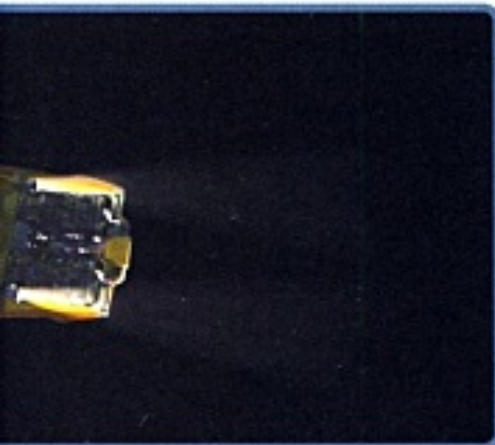
exist any more.”

—John Knoll, Visual Effects Supervisor



[ABOVE] Scenes once shot with a matte painting and a few blue-screen extras now combine models, computer graphics, matte paintings, and many separate live-action elements, including tricky smoke effects shot on the back lot at ILM.

[BELOW] While the model shop created a full-sized version of Anakin's speeder, most of the shots in the Coruscant chase scene place the blue-screened actors in a digitally modeled vehicle. Sometimes, even the actors are digital doubles.



To Knoll, the tools are not as important as the results. "As some techniques go by the wayside and other ones take over, I just don't feel too much nostalgia about that because the craftsmanship is always the same. When I started at ILM, the job that I did for the first few years doesn't even exist any more. I operated a motion-control animation stand, and I shot slit-scan elements and pinblock elements [older optical effects]. I did a lot of things that are done with computer graphics now," he adds.

As for the "good old days" of optical compositing and color matching, Knoll says, "I don't miss those days at all, because so much of the effort that went into putting a shot together was just mechanical assembly. The majority of the effort was trying to make sure you didn't have a matte line and that the colors were at least sort of close. Now you can take a lot of those mechanical assembly issues for granted. Now we're doing harder shots than we used to do, so people are still working hard, but it's more on the aesthetics of the shot and less on the technical issues."

Despite his unique first visit to ILM, Knoll doesn't recommend trying to get in the door by calling up and hoping for a day tour. His hobbies had much more to do with his eventual career. When hopeful effects artists ask him for advice, he says, "Just make images. The best skill to have is a discriminating eye."

"In terms of being a filmmaker, the best thing is to get a camera and make something. The bar has been lowered so much with these digital video cameras and nonlinear editing systems. You buy an iMac, and it comes with iMovie, and you can do real work with that. It costs hardly anything to make films these days. Just getting out there and learning how to tell stories visually and getting some experience with that kind of stuff is tremendously helpful."

These days, Knoll still enjoys a few hobbies. He participated in *Robot Wars* for a couple of years, and he is working on a program that monitors and controls the lights in his house. He never lost his love for space travel, however, and he turns his computer graphics skills toward a personal project that brings him back to his youthful passion. "It's a recreation of the Apollo 11 mission seen from the points of view that weren't recorded," he explains, "like seeing the landing from the surface."

As ever, Knoll's hobbies are never far from his career, and vice versa. Once you know where to look for that space plane in the opening shot, start watching the asteroid field chase between Jango Fett and Obi-Wan Kenobi. One of those asteroids is actually Eros, to which the NEAR probe was recently sent for the better part of a year. Knoll contacted his friends at NASA for a high-resolution model and inserted the real asteroid among the computer-generated rocks orbiting Geonosis. Don't feel bad if you don't see it. After all, it looks exactly like an asteroid.

Paul Huston: Troubleshooter

Paul Huston is an ILM original.

While attending the University of Colorado in the mid-70s, Huston attended a presentation on the making of *Silent Running*. The presenter was Huston's advisor, Jamie Schwartz, who had worked with John Dykstra on the movie. When *Star Wars* began production, says Huston, Schwartz gave his students a tip: "If any of you guys want to come out to L.A. and glue model kit parts on space ships, you'll have a chance."

"Everybody laughed," said Huston. "I thought, 'Oh, yeah, sure.'"

He gave the offer little more thought. After graduating from archi-

"It's really rewarding. The shot comes on the screen, and you know it's good."

Episode II Easter Eggs—10 Hidden Secrets from *Attack of the Clones*

by Pablo Hidalgo & Dave Gross

Fans have been speculating about some of these for months, and now ones pop up all the time—for proof, check out this issue's "Rebel Rumblings." Now that you have your own copy of *Attack of the Clones*, you can join the hunt for Easter eggs both in the film and, for you lucky DVD owners, in the menu system itself. Here are a few that we've noticed already. Can you spot more?

If you watch closely as Anakin and Padmé walk the streets of Mos Espa on the way to Watto's shop, you might spot a familiar astromech: RS-D4, the same droid that blew its top and caused Owen Lars to buy R2-D2 instead.

You can't see this one, but if you listen carefully as Padmé's ambassadorial ship explodes, you'll hear a familiar scream known as a "Wilhelm." Originally created in the 1940s as part of the Warner Brothers sound library, the scream was used for years as a stock effect. Later named for an unlucky cowboy who stopped to fill his pipe when he should have been looking for Indians in *The Charge on Feather River* (1953), the scream and several variations became an in-joke among sound designers when Ben Burtt used it for a stormtrooper who plummets down a Death Star chasm. In *Empire*, you can hear it when Chewbacca tosses stormtroopers around the car-

bon-freeding platform. In *Jedi*, it's the Weequay falling into the sarlacc pit, and in *Menace* it's a Naboo soldier getting shot in the hangar as the pilots run for their ships.

Fans of 2001's *A Space Odyssey* might recognize a familiar vessel leaving Coruscant as Padmé's ship approaches for a landing. Visual effects supervisor John Knoll added it in homage to one of his favorite films.

John Knoll's team also added a tiny, tiny reference to the original *Star Wars* movie. You'll need a keen eye and a quick finger on the pause button, but you can just barely make out a trio of X-wings chasing a TIE fighter far below Anakin's speeder in the Coruscant chase scene.

Everyone recognizes the YT-1300 freighter as the same model as the highly modified Millennium Falcon. Visual Effects Supervisor Pablo Helman points out that this obvious reference was done with the boss's full support. "He said something like, 'Should we dare go there?'" reports Helman. "And we did." Fans of the expanded universe might also recognize the Corellian bulk freighter—the same model as Talon Kerdok's *Wild Kerdok*.

Jango Fett might be a skillful warrior, but wearing that helmet has made him careless about low doorways. You can see and hear him bang his head as he enters Slave 1, a sly reference to the unintentional shot of a stormtrooper knocking his noggin on a low-hanging door in *A New Hope*.

The ILM animators had a special relationship with the giant, tick-like, bovine creatures in the Naboo meadow scenes. "The shaaks got to be a bit of a joke with the crew," says John Knoll, who added one to the asteroid field dogfight by way of quoting Ken Ralston's addition of potatoes and tennis shoes in *The Empire Strikes Back*. This one is hard to spot, so Knoll suggests you look for the legs and snout. "We were a little conservative on that one," he says. "It's got craters all over it, but it's the shaak geometry."

Another of the creatures appears briefly in the Coruscant chase scene, but it passes so quickly that you must seek it frame-by-frame. "It's right there, right in the middle of the frame," says Knoll, "but there's no way you'd notice it."

"It was almost a competition," says Visual Effects Supervisor Ben Snow. "Can anyone get a shaak in their scene?" As for his contribution, he only hints, "There may be a shaak on fire during the Clone War."



texture school, he spent a year as an illustrator. He just happened to be in L.A. with his portfolio when he decided to pay a visit to Schwartz in the ILM warehouse in Van Nuys. Huston had no idea that inside that warehouse, another world was under construction. "There were Joe Johnston drawings pinned up to the wall, and there were these really amazing models sitting around, and Colin Cantwell's initial concept models. I think at that point they had some Ralph McQuarrie paintings. They were looking for an illustrator to help Joe Johnston do the first group of storyboards for *Star Wars*." Thus, Huston's first job for ILM was to help with the first batch of about three hundred storyboards. "I was just trying like crazy to make my drawings look like Joe's."

Even nature is not immune to a few improvements from Paul Huston. When he couldn't find a waterfall large enough for the Naboo retreat picnic scene, he gave Mother Nature a little cosmetic enhancement. "The waterfalls are actually one waterfall up by Shasta, McCloud Falls. Actually, it's three, McCloud Falls, Burning Falls, and this other small falls. They were shot with a video camera from different angles to get different kinds of lighting, different lighting angles. Twenty-six different versions of those three different falls were composited together in the background to fill up that bigger-than-Niagara falls kind of width."



because you did things right. " —Paul Huston, Digital Matte Artist

Since joining the company, Huston has served ILM as a model maker, technical consultant, cameraman, and visual effects art director. In recent years, he has joined the matte department, where he plays a key role in ILM's transition from traditional to digital matte painting.

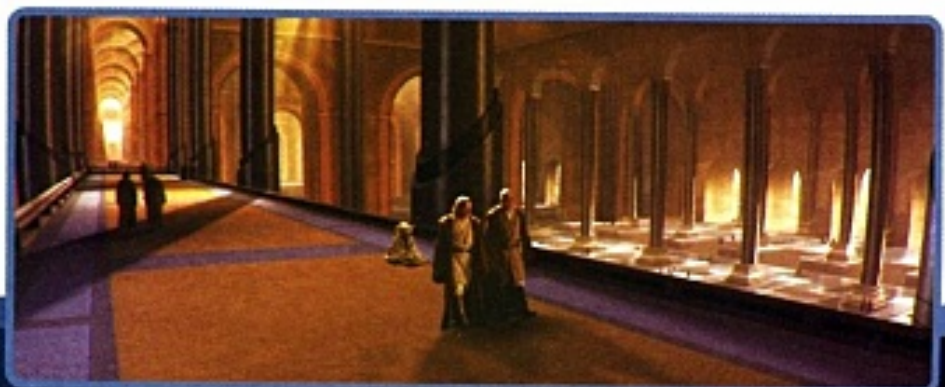
Among other scenes in *Attack of the Clones*, Huston created the daylight exterior matte painting seen through the window of Palpatine's office when Amidala visits. Or rather, he recreated it. "It was based on a painting from Episode I from the same location, but it was just upgraded for this movie."

The waterfall assignment was perfect for Huston, who finds inspiration in the great outdoors. "There's nothing as beautiful as nature, to me. We kind of make the translation. If you ever hang out with a matte artist, they're constantly going, 'Wow, look at that! That would never work.' You're looking at the sky, or clouds, a mountain, or something, and they say, 'You could never do that! No one would believe it.' So there's a translation you have to make to something that's acceptable on the screen."

Huston has a certain reputation among the younger generation at ILM. "People come to me with problems. I'm a problem solver. When

[ABOVE] Paul Huston created the Naboo picnic scene almost single-handed. One of his greatest challenges was matching the light on the live actors, who were filmed on location in Italy, to the light on the twenty-six different waterfall shots he combined into a giant falls.

[RIGHT] Huston accomplished the digital matte painting for this scene of the Jedi Temple mezzanine within the month that he was asked to do so.





things aren't busy, nobody ever talks to me." When the deadline looms, however, it's another story. When the Jedi Temple mezzanine sequence needed to be done by Christmas in time to get it on the first reel, supervisors brought it to Huston around Thanksgiving. Needless to say, he made the deadline.

On occasion, Huston is a one-man effects team. For the Naboo picnic scene, he found the waterfalls he wanted in northern California. "I went there, I shot them. I downloaded all the digital video, composited them all in the shot, created the model, photographed the model, created a matte painting, created a 3D environment to project everything onto to make the 3D matte move, and then composited the live-action plate with the actors."

While the challenges of creating so many elements for a single scene can make him scramble, Huston considers it satisfying. "It's really rewarding. The shot comes on the screen, and you know if it's good it's because you did things right."

As someone who has seen visual effects evolve from *A New Hope* to *Attack of the Clones*, Huston thinks there'll always be a place for both low and high tech in visual effects. "When we were working on the first *Star Wars*, we were setting up these little card tables, breaking little kit pieces off of models. Gary Kurtz came in with this 8 x 10 beautiful print-out of an X-wing that you had to look at really close to tell it wasn't a photograph of a model. And he said, 'You know, we did this with a Cray

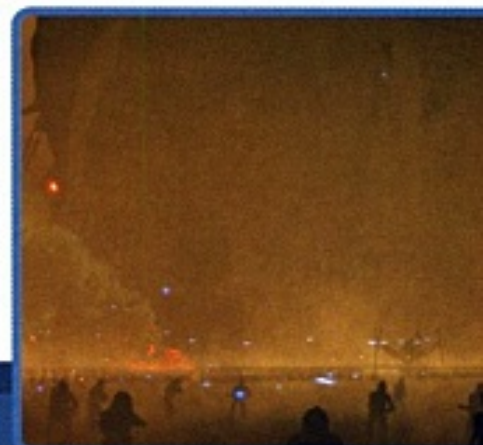
[computer].'" And everybody's face turns kind of white like they're thinking, 'Oh, we're going to have to start looking for a job.' And he said, 'Don't worry. It's really expensive.'

"There are still places where a CG model is not as good as a real model," says Huston, "but the gap has narrowed incredibly. The computer has taken over more and more. And they've gotten to be so powerful. I've got two of them here that are probably worth about \$1,000 each. Back in 1976, it was probably several million dollars to get that kind of power. Eventually, if the curve keeps going the way that it's been going, who's to say that they won't completely take over?"

Some filmmakers prefer working with miniatures simply for their physicality. "Peter Jackson [*Lord of the Rings*] really likes working with models," says Huston. "He likes to have really big scale models. It's like a set to him. He gets on there and then he can figure out camera angles. He sees what it looks like, and then he gets creative. It stimulates him more than looking at something on a screen or a monitor. For me, I like models."

Even if computer animation eventually makes model making cost-prohibitive, there may still be aesthetic reasons to cling to the old technology. "Well, you know, Will Vinton [*Meet the Raisins*, *Claymation Christmas*] does claymation," says Huston. "There are still people doing really great black and white photography. People are still doing bronze sculptures. That's as old as the Greeks. I'm sure there'll still be models."

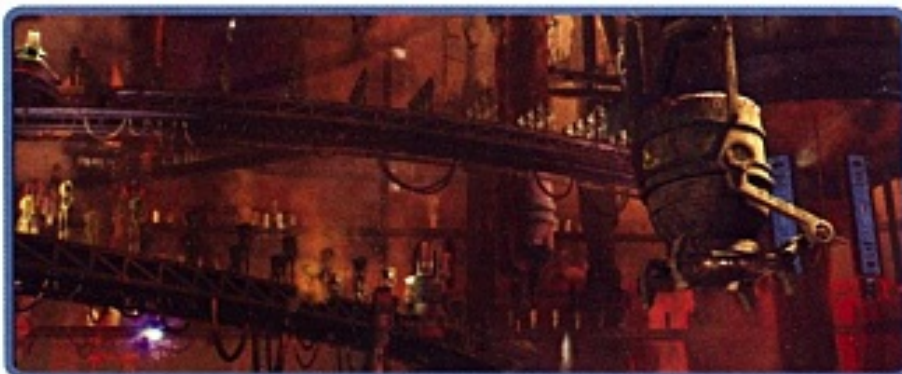
"I'm incredibly proud to have been a part of bringing the Clone Wars to t





[ABOVE] Every element in a computer-animated scene exists on its own separate layer. Smoke and steam effects remain one of the things it is best to film live.

[BELOW] This clone war shot began life as a still photograph which was combined with a matte painting and then layered with increasingly complex CG elements.



Ben Snow: Film Fan

Ben Snow's love of fantasy and film began in the same place: the school library.

"There was a book called *Monsters of the Movies*," he explains. "It was like a sort of a kids' book. I read that and thought, 'Wow, this is really cool.' So I became a big horror movie fan."

The discovery made Snow hungry for more creature features, but in 1970s rural Australia, "there wasn't a lot of opportunity to see horror films." Snow sated his appetite at the occasional art house revival, where *The Mummy* and *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* made lasting impressions on his imagination. "I was very much more of a horror fan than a science-fiction fan."

There were, of course, exceptions to that rule. Snow cites *Star Wars* as one of his big influences. "One of the things that inspired me to get into special effects was an interview with Dennis Muren (Effects

Director of Photography) on *The Empire Strikes Back*. That was one of the 'Ah, that's what I want to do!' moments."

Snow was quick to translate what he admired on screen into his studies. "At school, I did the usual sort of student films, making our own space epics. The time that I graduated from high school and started college was a pretty rich time in fantasy cinema. There was *Blade Runner*, *Mad Max II: Road Warrior*, and a ton of others."

While he remained active in the university film group, Snow took a "fairly straight computing-related" job after school. He had not abandoned hope of entering the film industry, but he had not yet made the connection between his computing



screen."

—Ben Snow, Visual Effects Supervisor





skills and film. "I looked for work as a runner or anything industry related. Someone said, 'You're crazy. You've got this computing background. You should apply to a computer graphics house.'"

To put an exclamation point on that advice, Snow soon found himself galvanized by ILM's visual effects on *The Abyss*. "I'd liked *Tron* and *The Last Starfighter*, but they'd had a CG look. With *The Abyss*, suddenly computer graphics didn't mean just that particular look." After a few

years working in a computer graphics house, Snow got a tip that ILM was recruiting. He sent over a reel and got the job, at last working on the sort of movies he had loved as a child.

Snow has found that being a cineaste has its advantages while working as an effects supervisor. "It makes it easy to deal with the director—particularly a director like George Lucas, who's very filmic and knowledgeable about film. You start using shorthand."

Snow is one of the founders of Flicks, a film club at ILM. Each month, the five-member committee chooses a film, and they take turns introducing the films. On one recent occasion, they even persuaded a certain director to visit. "We invited George down to introduce *THX 1138*, both the student film and the feature. I hosted a discussion with him afterward. We did the same thing with *American Graffiti*."

For Snow, the high point of his contributions to Episode II is the Clone War sequence. "I remember in the '80s, some of the magazines were speculating what it would be like. So I'm incredibly proud to have

[ABOVE] The shot of a walker being dropped into the fight was originally meant to be a background element, but it soon became another exciting moment in the battle.

[RIGHT & BELOW] This sculpted spire was combined with a digital matte painting to contribute a sense of realism to the Geonosis terrain.





been a part of bringing the start of the Clone War to the screen."

Part of the reason Snow enjoyed creating the Clone War was that his team had plenty of creative freedom. "George had a very good idea of what he wanted, and he had some really good animatics that they did up at Lucasfilm. We had to build all the creatures. The photography consisted of actors against blue screens—so a lot of it was completely created through visual effects. That was great."

One of the biggest creative challenges in the Clone War was to build on the legacy of recent war movies, which have become increasingly intense and visceral. While the technical challenge was substantial, the drama of the sequence was even more important to Snow. Fresh off of work on *Pearl Harbor*, and inspired by movies like *Saving Private Ryan*, he wanted "to make people feel more immersed in the battle. We definitely wanted to make it feel grittier and harder-edged."

Snow lobbied to use photographic reference, not just digital terrain. "One of our matte painters had been on a big trip across the southwest and had taken a ton of stills," he says, "so we sifted through a lot of material to try and work out where we would shoot this stuff." When they showed one particular shot to Lucas, he said, "That is Geonosis."

Building from the still, Snow's team heavily modified the terrain and added elements such as miniature gunships and walkers shot at ILM on a separate stage. Then a choreography team added CG clones over the CG terrain, and over them was added smoke effects shot on the ILM back lot. On top of that were layered more vehicles, this time computer-generated, including the famous drop-ship that leaves an armored walker on the battlefield. The popular shot almost didn't make it into the movie.

"Originally the shot of that had been cut from the film. We really loved it and we'd actually built most of it. So I said, 'Ah, George, can we just finish this up and stick it in the back of a shot? We won't put too

much work into it.' He said, 'Oh, sure, sure. Put it in the back of this shot.' So the animator got the model and stuck it *right in the middle* of this shot. So, if you see the trailer for Episode II, it has a version of this shot without the ship dropping the crawler off. We brought it up and showed it to George, and he went, 'Wow! Yeah, okay.' It was one of those sort of happy things where I'm, 'Oh, I'm glad we asked for it.'"

Ultimately, some of the Clone Wars sequences have about ninety layers of images, including still photography, matte paintings, miniatures, smoke and pyrotechnic effects, live action footage, and CG animation.

While the Clone War is Snow's favorite accomplishment on Episode II, he was delighted to be assigned to work with Dennis Muren on the droid factory sequence. Because of Muren's schedule, however, he worked with Snow only on the planning stages before moving on to his next project. Still, the experience left a lasting impression as the man who once inspired Snow to pursue visual effects now acted as his peer and mentor. "It was a really great experience, and on my first outing as a visual effects supervisor, to have that person to say, 'What do you think of this approach to this?' That was great."

In the future, Snow thinks visual effects will concentrate more on the use of real photography. "There's been a rise of photo modeling that has been used in a lot of features. We used that in Episode II to model some of our creatures. I think that what we'll be doing is essentially recreating the world more exactly in our computer in such a way that we can free up the camera and move around the world a lot more clearly."

For more on the artists of ILM, watch for Animation Director Rob Coleman's "Behind the Magic" column, which returns next issue with a look at Poggle the Lesser and the animators who brought the nefarious Geonosian to life. [u](#)



FEEDBACK

BEN BURTT

30 YEARS OF
STAR WARS
SOUNDS



Aiming for the immutable truth of science, Ben Burtt found himself swerving toward the fiction of movie making—which eventually lead him right back to science. “The circle is now complete.”

In the pantheon of sound design, Ben Burtt holds a place all his own—how many other sound artists can you name off the top of your head? Back in the days when the term “sound designer” hadn’t yet entered the industry’s lexicon, Burtt displayed a unique set of skills for *Star Wars*. That effort garnered him a Special Achievement Award for sound effects at the 1978 Academy Awards—for his first job right out of school. It also launched his 27-year-long career, during which he has ushered in a new age of aural landscapes and revolutionized the way everyone thinks about movie sound.

BY FRANCIS K. LALUMIÈRE

LOOP

ORIGINS

Burt is famous for his sound work on films such as *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, but his professional activities have often brought him away from the mixing console. He has worn many filmmaking hats—director, writer, editor, and even actor—yet a keen observer might have guessed his passion for sound based on one pivotal childhood event.



Ben Burtt created R2-D2's distinctive voice and considers it to be one of his toughest challenges from the Classic Trilogy. Photo by Giles Westly

[BELOW] Burtt looks up from his large tape recorder while working on *A New Hope* at Lucasfilm's original offices.



"When I was about six years old, I was sick in bed for a few weeks with a serious illness," Burtt says. "My father brought a tape recorder home from the university. At that time, tape recorders were gigantic, heavy objects, and they were certainly not the kind of thing that anyone had in their homes." Picture a bedridden six-year-old dwarfed by a huge reel recorder. "I could sit there and make noises and tell stories and I could listen to things and play them back. It became a form of entertainment. I started recording off television, my favorite television shows, and listening to the sounds back without seeing the picture. That led to a real interest in the use of music and sound effects, how they were used to tell a story, how they augmented the presentation, the drama of the motion picture."

Despite his childhood love of sound, Burtt seemed destined for a far different career. "My father was a chemistry professor at Syracuse University," he says. "My grandfather was a psychology professor at Ohio State University, and my mother was a professor in the Child-

Psychology Department, so there was a lot of academic ambiance." Thus, despite a penchant for filmmaking, having shot 8mm movies with friends since he'd been old enough to operate a camera, Burtt went to college to study physics. "I went to school always thinking that I was training to be a scientist," he says. "Perhaps a science teacher, or I had dreams of being an astronaut. I never considered motion pictures as a career."

It took another significant event to make Burtt change his mind about his professional aspirations. "When I was finishing up my college degree in physics, at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania," Burtt says, "I made a film during my summer vacation called *Yankee Squadron*, which was a World War I adventure flying movie. I submitted it to the National Student Film Festival in 1970, and it won." The unexpected success of *Yankee Squadron* stopped Burtt in his scientific tracks and started him thinking about the movie business. "I graduated, came home, and decided to take some film classes at Syracuse University," he says. "I'd never had any technical training."

While in his early twenties, Burtt worked part-time and kept up with his film classes, still unsure of what he wanted to do with his life. Fate would once more nudge him in the right direction. "While at Syracuse

point, and I emulated a lot of what I appreciated in 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, which really showed space in a new visual way." Apparently, some people thought that Burtt's *Genesis* also featured a few things that had never quite been done with so much promise before. The McGraw-Hill book company was impressed enough to hand him an award and a scholarship to attend film school. Burtt applied to a few schools around the United States, eventually landing a seat at the prestigious University of Southern California, in Los Angeles. That proved to be a "sound" decision in more than one way.

Leaving his native New York, Burtt moved to California and learned all he could about filmmaking. "My interest in sound kind of focused at that point," he recalls. "People didn't go into school thinking I'm going to be a sound editor, or something of that sort. But I got a job in the sound department, helping students with their soundtracks. I got a teaching assistantship as a form of income, and I got duties in the sound department to create a sound-effects library. And I just got really interested in sound."

At USC, Burtt's film-related interests were diverse, but for some reason sound seemed to pursue him. "When it came time for me to graduate, although I did my thesis on visual effects, my reputation was one of

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University, I made an animated film—it's actually a special-effects film—called *Genesis*," says Burtt. "It was a film that depicted the creation of the universe. I got really interested in special effects at that

a sound fanatic." About that same time, in 1975, writer-director George Lucas and producer Gary Kurtz, both USC graduates, were looking for a young student to do some sound work for them while they were gearing up to shoot *Star Wars*. It didn't take them long to find Burtt.

SOUND WORK: GENERATIONS

Almost thirty years later, Ben Burtt still likes to go out to record his own sounds, always looking for new material, especially when he visits a new locale. "Obviously, when you're going to a new environment, especially a new country, a new continent, you can't resist the possibilities of collecting new sounds," Burtt says. "Every culture has a different set of noises: traffic, street corners, trucks, or whatever."

During the filming of *Attack of the Clones*, Burtt found himself in just such a new environment: Australia. Unfortunately, he was too busy with his other duties on the film to escape the set for a recording trip. Thus, in Sydney he set loose Sound Editor Matt Wood on a quest for new auditory stimuli, concentrating on the area's animal life.



[above, left] Burtt makes sounds for *A New Hope* in his first sound office.

Obi-Wan Kenobi's Jedi Starfighter evades Sloe 2 amid the asteroids surrounding Geonosis.



[BELOW] Burt as a Theed dignitary in *The Phantom Menace*.

"Then my son Benny came over," Burt says. "He was sixteen at the time, and he needed something to do. You know—teenager stuck in another country," he adds with a chuckle. "He had never really shown much interest in recording sound, but he got interested during that trip, because he would sit in the editing room and see what was happening. I had my recording gear with me, and I suggested that he go around

Sydney and record the various trains, monorails, and ships in the harbor, and motors and things. He also recorded many things in the studio and noises on the set, on occasion, and he got a good library. A few dozen things in the movie probably came from recordings that he made."

His brief movie-making stint doesn't mean that Benny will succeed his dad at the mixing console. He might in fact follow in Burt's original footsteps. "He's interested in science, and he's quite a sportsman," says Burt. "He started college this past Fall." Another bit of history repeating itself.

Burt knows a lot about that history-repeating-itself business, particularly when it comes to sound. It has been his responsibility to keep six different movies sounding like they belong to the same family—all over a stretch of thirty years. That juggling task becomes all the more daunting when you throw in the creation of new sounds that have to seem like they belong in the *Galaxy Far, Far Away*, even though they've never been heard in a *Star Wars* film before. "I guess that, since it's always been me and my sensibilities that have been responsible for the sound effects, you tend to recognize the same style," he says. "It's probably just the fact that I'm always trying to please myself and make the sounds I think work for me. So it's the same taste, and it tends to end up sounding like it belongs."

New *Star Wars* movies also have a tendency to sound like their predecessors because of the sheer vastness of their sound heritage. "With *Star Wars*, we've built up a big library over the years, because for each film I will create 800 to 1,000 new sounds," Burt says. "And I have a lot of sounds I've made over the years that were not used. I'd try different sounds for different events in the film, and I'd pick one we liked, but there'd be others, outtakes, and on occasion I'd go back to the outtakes to find something."



“IF YOU HAVE NO SOUND FOR A MOMENT, PEOPLE ARE LEFT WITH AN UNSATISFIED EXPECTATION, AND THEN YOU SURPRISE THEM WITH THE SOUND.”

FRESH TRACKS

Some classic *Star Wars* sounds make an appearance in every single episode of the saga, but Burt is not content with cutting-and-pasting. "There are always some changes in each film," he says. "I add something; I try to come up with a new twist each time. When we did *The Phantom Menace*, Darth Maul had a double-bladed lightsaber, so I made a sound for that. It was similar to the lightsaber, but it was faster and had this rapid rhythmic motion to it. This time around, in the lightsaber fight in Dooku's hangar at the end, we did a lot of strange squeals, echoes that went all around you. Each time the sabers disengaged from each other, there was a funny, echoing sound. We tried to make them kind of shrieking, as if there were voices, like ghosts screaming. I always try to make a classic sound more interesting and somehow relate to the drama of the moment."

In *Attack of the Clones*, one sound in particular made quite an impact: the seismic charges Jango Fett uses to throw off a pursuing Obi-Wan in the asteroid field. Nobody had ever heard anything of the kind, yet every moviegoer felt that the sound had a clear *Star Wars* family feel to it. Ben Burtt has the simplest—and the most fascinating—explanation for that phenomenon. "I actually tried making a sound like that on the very first *Star Wars* movie. I had an idea that explosions in space should

sound different from explosions that we normally hear on Earth, and I remember making up a series of different and very odd-sounding explosions, about twenty-five years ago." Burt would then cut some of those avant-garde explosion sounds into *A New Hope* in various places without warning anyone. The audience's reactions to the sound during preliminary screenings helped Burt guide his choices in sound design. "I used to do that all the time in order to experiment with sounds. This is how we discovered the laser sound, or the TIE fighter—I would make up a few possibilities, and at different times in the movie things would sound different. People might come up to me afterward and say, 'Wow, I really liked this particular sound for that starship.'"

MOVING FROM 8mm to 16mm

When Ben Burt went to study at Syracuse University, he got access to 16mm film equipment, a true revelation for the young film student. "Up to that point, everything was 8mm or Super 8, which were the only available formats. You couldn't shoot any synched sound or anything in those days. You had to fabricate the whole soundtrack after you'd shot the movie. That was really where I worked out lots of problems and developed skills as a sound synchronizer. I used to give presentations where I would run the movie and at the same time I had a tape recorder running alongside the projector, and I had to try to keep the two in synchronization by putting my thumb on the reel and slowing it down, or stopping for a second. So I got very good at on-the-fly synchronization. It made me completely appreciate the technology once I actually moved to more professional equipment, because I had spent years trying to synchronize my soundtracks and blend sounds together."

Oddly, no one commented on Burt's ether space explosions during the mix of *Attack of the Clones*. "George just said, 'Okay, fine, next reel,'" recalls Burt. "And we had done something pretty radical—here was a sound that had been rejected years ago." It was only a matter of time before reactions would start making their way back to the sound designer, like an echo after a blast. Since the release of *Attack of the Clones*, the seismic charge is one of the most frequently discussed sound elements in Burt's correspondence. "I think one of the reasons it was effective," he says, "was that I tried another little experiment which was to have no sound at all for about a second before the explosions went off. The movie goes completely

silent. And we delayed the sound so that it was not in sync with the flash of the explosion on the screen—kind of like lightning and thunder." That idea came to Burt at the last minute, during mixing. He felt the seismic charges didn't have as much of an impact as they could. "If you have no sound for a moment, people are left with

For a while, Burt's strange explosion sounds—what he called "space ether explosions" back then—were part of his experimental repertoire. "But nobody liked them!" says Burt with a laugh. "Everybody said, 'Oh, that's just too crazy and weird.' So, a little embarrassed, I dropped the idea." Burt didn't drop the recordings themselves, however; he kept them archived all those years, just in case. "When it came around in *Attack of the Clones* to doing the seismic charges, I fished out some of

an unsatisfied expectation, and then you surprise them with the sound. That's what I called an audio black hole. The explosion seems much bigger because there's been this silence."

Burt had shared film-editing duties with another editor on *The Phantom Menace*, but the task of cutting Episode II was his alone, working closely with Lucas. Ironically, the added workload somehow helped Burt in his sound quest. "I was able to be very close to the material and



[ABOVE, LEFT] Burt in his editing room at Lucasfilm's original headquarters in Northern California.

[LEFT] Burt takes a break from working on *The Phantom Menace*. Photo by Sue Adler.





give a lot of thought to the sounds," Burt says. "I tried to incorporate in the editing of the film a design that would accommodate the things I wanted to do with the sounds." Creative synergy aside, finding time to

known. "I also did sound design," he admits. "I wasn't credited as the sound designer—they had a team—but I couldn't resist making things, saying 'here's what you put here, here's what you put there.'"

BEN BURTT

do justice to both jobs proved to be quite an endeavor. "I always had to steal my time for sound," Burt says. "There were so many deadlines that had to be met with picture cutting that I had to focus just on the picture longer than I wanted to. And then when the time would come, I'd grab a day or two, or a few hours, or I'd come in on a weekend, and I'd start laying down the groundwork for sound."

"WHAT I REALLY WANT TO DO . . ."

Ben Burt's career, with seven films already completed and another one in preparation, has been cruising at a comfortable speed for the past ten years. "I've always had my hand in a bunch of different areas," says Burt. From helping out with the editing (as far back as the original *Star Wars*) to working on second and third unit effects shots at Industrial Light & Magic, Burt kept involving himself in multiple ways. "Around 1990 I decided that I didn't want to do sound full-time," he says. "So I went off and directed an IMAX film called *Blue Planet*," a space-flight documentary was spurred by Burt's passion for science and space exploration. After *Blue Planet*, Burt went on to direct two more IMAX films, including *Special Effects: Anything Can Happen*, a documentary on the history of movie special effects, nominated for an Academy Award in 1996.

Burt even had a chance to touch on the Indiana Jones mythos (which he had helped create, sound-wise), when he was offered his own episode of *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* series. "I was the second unit director on the whole series," Burt says, "doing about 22 episodes of directing fight scenes and chases and insert shots. I began to get more and bigger assignments, handling principal actors, and eventually it led to having a whole episode of my own. It was 'Attack of the Hawkmen.' I was also an editor on the series, and a writer." Once again, Burt's multiple personalities resurfaced—including the one for which he is best

Burt appreciates the variety of filmmaking roles he has performed over the years. "I've been very blessed in the sense that I can ricochet back and forth to different jobs, so I don't get bored," he says with a laugh. "Obviously, there's satisfaction in different areas. With directing you get the creative satisfaction of having your ideas be in charge. But directing is also the hardest job. It's the most stressful, certainly the most demanding, physically and mentally. I suppose editing is the nearest thing to filmmaking in which you have all the materials under your control, in front of you in the peace of your room. Directing is like a military operation; you're out there giving orders and marching to get done before the sun goes down."

One might be surprised not to see sound work battling it out with directing and editing for the favor of Ben Burt. "Sound I love," he says, "but unless it's done under controlled circumstances, kind of what George Lucas allows, it can be a very difficult, frustrating job, because you're just not given the time to really polish the soundtrack. I don't like the idea of jamming everybody together, forty editors, and doing it in three weeks. Results might be good, but I think it's not as satisfying."

Editing is more pleasing to Burt because it is, technically and creatively, a middle point between directing and sound work. "It involves aspects of both," says Burt. "Like the director, you're taking control of the visuals and deciding what the audience sees and hears, what order of events takes place. If you have the inclination, it's also a place where you can play with the soundtrack a great deal, because it's not only putting together the picture, but it's also putting together the soundtrack."

"So which thing is the most healthful?" Burt asks rhetorically. "Creatively and physically, it's probably the editing." Nevertheless, the multi-talented Burt will go down in history books—and in the memories of a generation of moviegoers—as the first "real" sound designer, the man who literally broke the sound barrier. 🍷

Anakin Skywalker is shown from the chest up, sitting in the cockpit of a podracer. He has a determined expression and is looking forward. The background is a blurred cityscape at night with bright lights.

**GOING FROM
POINT A TO POINT B,
STAR WARS STYLE**

THE VEHICLE

Why do Star Wars vehicles never roll? If you define a Star Wars vehicle as anything that isn't a starship, they always come in one of three flavors: flying, hovering, or walking. Flyers are airplane equivalents like the snowspeeder and cloud car, soaring but never reaching the stars. The hoverers eschew wheels for a snazzy anti-gravity cushion seen on everything from Luke Skywalker's

landspeeder to the Trade Federation's AATs. The walkers, memorably represented by the Empire's AT-ATs and AT-STs, stomp about as if alive and evoke images of dogs, elephants, and chickens.

The wheel is left behind in this high-tech milieu. You have to scour through the primitive (the Gungans' pull-carts) and the weird (the Commerce Guild's hoop-wheeled hailfire droids) to find a vehicle that breaks the mold.



FAST OF EPISODE II

If we lived in the *Star Wars* universe, we might attribute this fact to technological advancement. From a movie-making standpoint, however, it's all about style. Luke Skywalker's landspeeder is the equivalent of a '73 Plymouth Duster held together with spare parts and Bondo. It's the magical method of propulsion ("look, no wires!") that gives the speeder its otherworldly spin.

Here are the most prominent vehicles used by the disintegrating galactic society of *Attack of the Clones*, each following the same basic

rules established in the classic movie trilogy a generation ago. Anti-gravity is still the favorite way to move, but the proto-Empire (embodied by the Republic's clone army) is already displaying its penchant for things that stomp. All the vehicles of Episode II are wicked fun, and one suspects that if one of these were built in the real world it would single-handedly kill the work-at-home movement. Everyone on Earth would be clamoring for a longer commute.

BY DANIEL WALLACE

OWEN'S AND DOOKU'S SPEEDER BIKES

One looks like a tiny moped, the other like an intergalactic Harley, but both follow the same principles established by the Imperial scout bikes in *Return of the Jedi*. Honest farmhand Owen Lars and manipulative fiend Count Dooku employ nimble, one-person speeder bikes, so exposed to the elements that they can feel the wind in their hair and the bugs in their teeth.

Owen Lars never pilots his bike in *Attack of the Clones*; instead, Anakin Skywalker borrows it for a mission that winds up murderous. As Anakin races over the sunset-red rocks of Tatooine, the beefy vehicle's capabilities are well seen: a blistering top speed for an open-air vehicle (up to 350 kilometers per hour) and acceleration to die for. Owen's machine is more properly called a swoop, a term coined by the late Brian Daley in his novel *Han Solo at Star's End*. A swoop is a bigger,



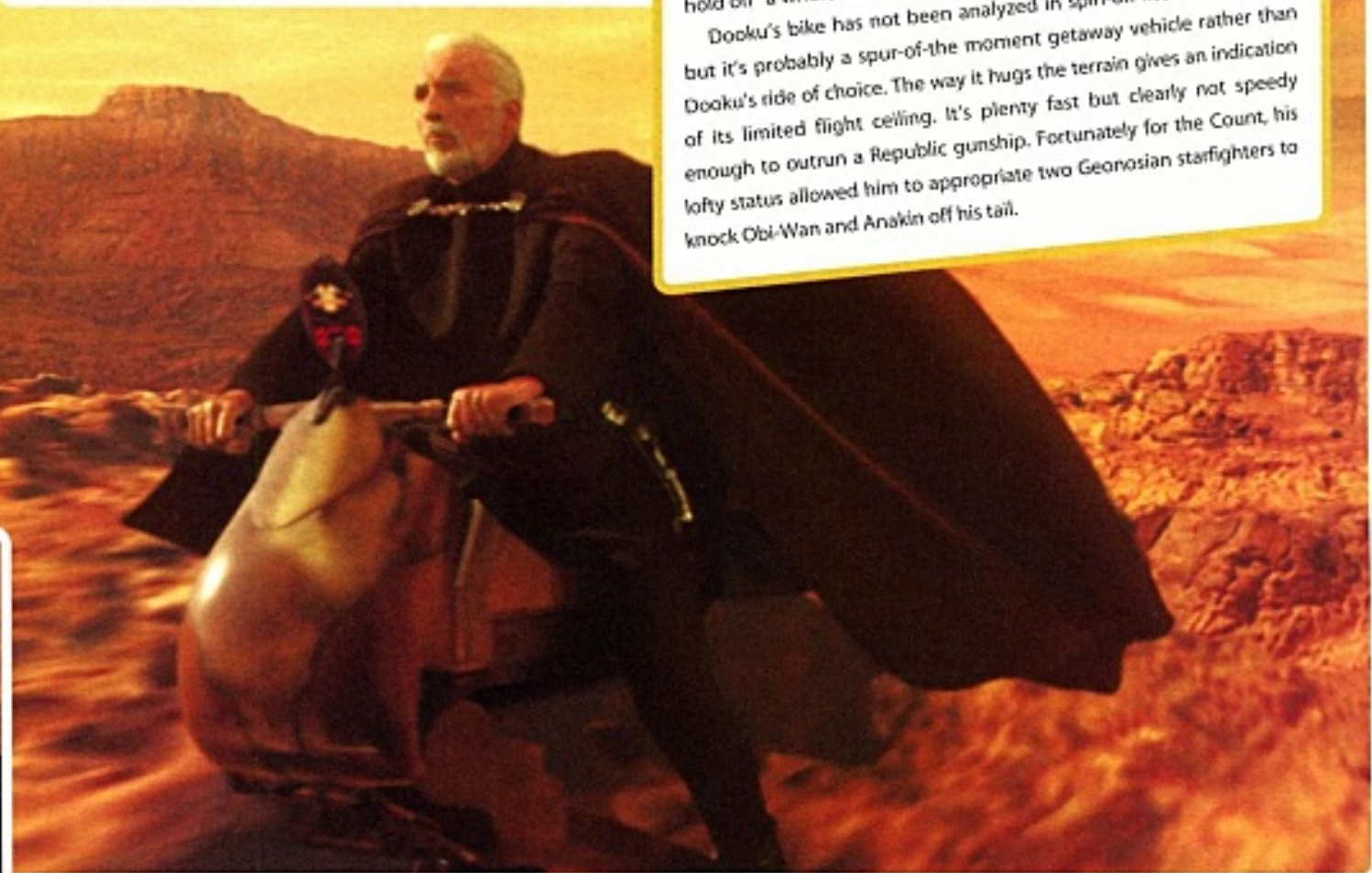
THE VEHICLES OF EPISODE II



badder version of a speeder bike, featuring a rip-roaring engine, handlebars, and a seat—and not much else.

Owen bought his swoop, a Mobquet Zephyr-G, from a flower-like Revvlen auctioneer in the outlying town of Mos Nytram. At more than 40 years old, this swoop is far past its racing days, but it is still more than adequate for checking the far-flung outposts that make up the perimeter of a moisture farm. After purchasing the Zephyr-G, Owen added two storage bins to the rear of the vehicle for carrying vaporator parts and survival gear. Owen also packs a weapon for scar-ing away Tusken Raiders—in later years, it will be said that Owen can hold off "a whole Tusken raiding party with one blaster."

Dooku's bike has not been analyzed in spin-off literature to date, but it's probably a spur-of-the moment getaway vehicle rather than Dooku's ride of choice. The way it hugs the terrain gives an indication of its limited flight ceiling. It's plenty fast but clearly not speedy enough to outrun a Republic gunship. Fortunately for the Count, his lofty status allowed him to appropriate two Geonosian starfighters to knock Obi-Wan and Anakin off his tail.





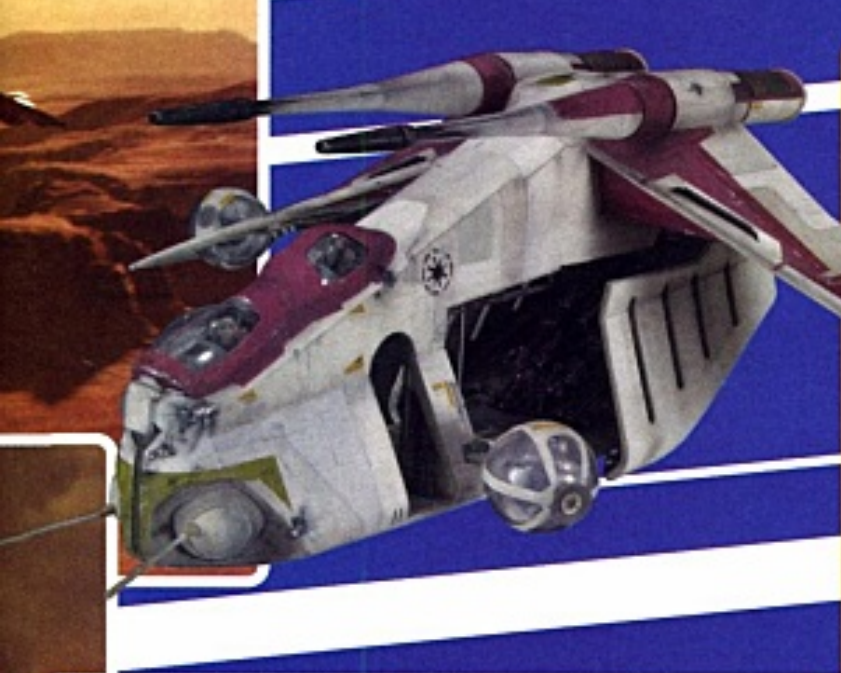
REPUBLIC GUNSHIP

The Republic gunship is a signature vehicle from *Attack of the Clones*, its image capturing Episode II's gritty warfare in the same way that the X-wing starfighter is emblematic of the classic trilogy. Known during production as the "Jedi attack helicopter," its profile was based partly on the Russian Hind assault helicopter and partly on a sinister Imperial design. "George wanted these to be helicopter-like flying vehicles," explains concept design supervisor Doug Chiang. "Nothing clicked until we went with a TIE fighter-ish look."

Given the fact that every *Star Wars* air vehicle can already hover (thanks to gravity-defying repulsorlifts), is there a need for one that specifically mimics the helicopter? Lieutenant Commander Mike Beidler of the U.S. Navy thinks so. "Until Episode II, no *Star Wars* vehicle had been conceived that fully utilized the strategic flying capabilities of a helicopter," he says. Beidler, who has piloted the H-46D Sea Knight in combat support in the Bosnian and Persian Gulf theaters and instructed aviation students in the art of helicopter flight using the TH-57B/C Bell Jet Ranger, points out that earlier craft, such as Luke's snowspeeder and the *Millennium Falcon*, used their hover capabilities only to maneuver out of small berthing slips. He gives the designers and animators of the Republic gunship high marks for real-world accuracy.



THE VEHICLES OF EPISODE II



"Some of the most exciting [U.S. Naval] flying comes in the form of Special Forces missions and training exercises, where we 'fastrope' SEAL (Sea, Air & Land) and EOD (Explosive & Ordnance Disposal) teams down a line onto ship decks or remote mountain peaks.

A similar scene in Episode II features a gunship dropping off Obi-Wan, Anakin, and several troops mere inches from Count Dooku's hangar dock." Beidler also notes the functional similarities between the gunship and most armed helicopters, including the pivoting gun pods and the troop capacity (the Navy's H-46 can carry 25 combat troops; the Republic gunship maxes out at 30).

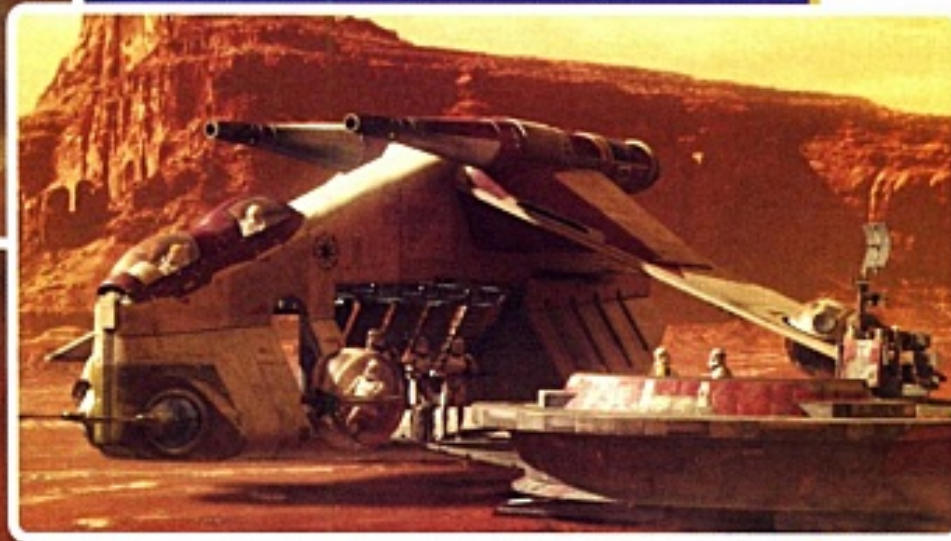
These traits, grounded in actual combat know-how, make the Republic gunship the perfect vehicle for "send in the cavalry" moments on Geonosis. Gunships extricate the Jedi survivors out of the execution arena and drop hundreds of clone troopers into strategic

pockets on the battlefield. Most memorably, they tear up the Separatists' droid soldiers with colorful barrages from their onboard arsenals. The gunships are aptly named: each bristles with three anti-personnel blaster turrets, four swiveling ball turrets, eight air-to-air rockets (four under each wing), and two missile launchers loaded with homing torpedoes that corkscrew in on their targets. When ILM animators put together the final battle scene they discovered that these homing missiles were difficult to distinguish from the similar projectiles fired by the Separatists' hailfire droids; the solution was to paint the Republic contrails white and the Separatists' a sooty black.

Despite its full armor, the gunship can zip through the atmosphere at speeds of up to 620 kilometers per hour. It still handles like a helicopter, however, and

Beidler says he appreciates the gunship's "side flare," a distinctive move designed to slow a helicopter down on a quick approach. "As the pilot approaches the flight deck he kicks a rudder pedal, turning the helicopter's huge fuselage 90 degrees, which slows the aircraft down almost to a dead stop," he explains. "In the Navy, we H-46 pilots used the technique to expedite vertical replenishment of ships at sea. In the movie, the side flare shows up in several scenes immediately following Yoda's command to create a perimeter around the surviving Jedi."

In geek-speak, the Republic gunship is known as the RHE (Rothana Heavy Engineering) Low-Altitude Assault Transport/Infantry, or simply the LAAT/i. Other models in the LAAT series include the LAAT/v, a slightly larger version with a hangar for vehicles instead of a passenger compartment, and the LAAT/c, built for hauling heavy cargo and used during the Battle of Geonosis to ferry AT-TE walkers into the war zone.





AT-TE

If the AT-AT is an elephant and the AT-ST a chicken, the Republic's AT-TE is surely some sort of bug. With its six legs, wide body, and weapon prongs, it calls to mind the top-heavy Japanese stag beetle. In Episode II, this unliving insect marches unnaturally into battle like a statue animated by a sorcerer.

AT-TE is short for All Terrain Tactical Enforcer, and the hexapedal walker is designed for a variety of battlefield roles from transport to all-out assault. It can carry twenty clone troopers in its fore and aft staging compartments, and the vehicle is operated by a crew of seven clones—a driver, a spotter, four gunners/technicians, and one particularly brave soul who operates the projectile cannon from his exposed, external firing chair. AT-TEs also have one non-living passenger on board: an IM-6 medical droid.

AT-TEs pack so much heat they make Empire's AT-ATs look undergunned by comparison. Each AT-TE has six anti-personnel turret-mounted blasters, four in the front and two in the back. It also carries a cannon on its back, a huge weapon designed to fire solid projectiles instead of energy beams. Common types of ammunition fed into the cannon include sonic charges, heat-seeking missiles, and "bunker buster" exploding rockets. The vehicle's armor features built-in electromagnetic shielding to protect against ion attacks, but—as seen in *Attack of the Clones*—a single well-placed missile can blast an AT-TE to smithereens.



THE VEHICLES OF EPISODE II



Rothana Heavy Engineering, a subsidiary of shipbuilding conglomerate Kuat Drive Yards, lifted the basic concept for the AT-TE from walking "enforcer" vehicles built by mining companies. (Note that the Commerce Guild, an entity with its fingers in mining operations across the galaxy, employs its own walking droids during the climax of Episode II.) After their trial by fire on barren Geonosis, AT-TEs, like the beetles they so much resemble, were deployed in swarms into nearly every theater of battle during the Clone Wars.

The AT-TE is a new walker for the Star Wars movies, but fans of the Expanded Universe have been seeing original walker designs for years, including the AT-TE's close cousin, the eight-legged Mountain Terrain Armored Transport (introduced in the 1994 novel *Champions of the Force*). Other conceptual spin-offs include the bipedal, scaled-down All Terrain Personal Transport (from the novel *Dark Force Rising*) and the four-legged, crab-walking All Terrain Anti-Aircraft (from the computer game *Force Commander*). No one has yet created a one-legged pogo walker.



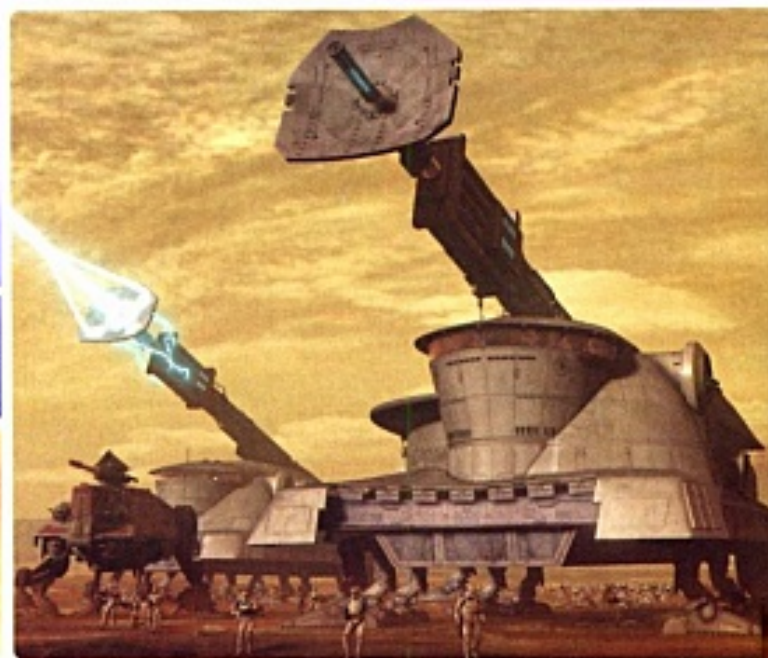
SPHA-T

Near the end of *Attack of the Clones*, we see that the Geonosians have developed the conceptual model of the Death Star, which Republic/Imperial engineers will later bring to fearsome life. But a close look at the Republic's SPHA-Ts shows that the war units have perfected the distinctive, many-lasers-into-one firing method that will one day destroy Alderaan.

The acronym-happy Clone Wars designers (whose later products will include the AT-AT, the AT-ST, and the TIE) named the SPHA-T, which stands for Self-Propelled Heavy Artillery—Turbolaser. The SPHA-T is an artillery piece, built for smashing enemy fortifications and knocking large airborne antagonists from the sky.

As befits a ground vehicle of the Republic army, the SPHA-T is a walker. Its twelve legs, six to a side, can centipede-shuffle across the battlefield at a lackadaisical max speed of 35 kilometers per hour. But artillery pieces are never designed as agile fighters—they're just really big guns and hence have traditionally been vulnerable to swift strikes and small arms fire. The SPHA-T fares better than most similar units, boasting a defensive screen of twelve retractable antipersonnel blasters crewed by ten clone troopers. It also can carry twenty troopers in its passenger compartment, who can hop out with rifles blazing if the SPHA-T falls under attack. All this is in addition to the vehicle's standard crew of fifteen.

All those troopers, however, are nothing compared to the SPHA-T's turbolaser. The elephantine weapon uses a focusing dish to combine several smaller lasers into a single, devastating beam. Each shot requires a colossal output of energy, and the power-hungry turbolaser feeds off a



reactor core contained in the center of the drive unit. The turbolaser's range is formidable, and it can easily puncture enemy deflector shields. The barrel of the laser can elevate to achieve optimum firing trajectories, but it cannot rotate. To attack targets to either side of the immediate line of fire, the entire vehicle must turn around on its dozen stumpy legs.

As suggested by the vehicle's name, its turbolaser is modular. A Self-Propelled Heavy Artillery unit can be fitted with an ion cannon, a specialized anti-vehicle laser, or a concussion missile launcher. When sporting such modifications, the vehicle is reclassified as an SPHA-I, an SPHA-V, or an SPHA-C.

During Episode II conceptual development, the original SPHA-T traveled on two huge tank treads. George Lucas, mindful of *Star Wars*' unspoken design principles, suggested it become a walker like the other clone ground vehicle, the AT-TE. In their big scene in *Attack of the Clones*, a lineup of SPHA-Ts fire at the Trade Federation's core ships as they lift off from the surface of Geonosis. The bright beams converge on one of the spheres, carving it up like a melon and sending it into a death-drop back onto its launching pad.



ANAKIN'S AIRSPEEDER

Anakin and Obi-Wan don't sideswipe a fruit stand, but their pursuit of assassin Zam Wesell has the hallmarks of a classic movie car chase. Long a staple of the action movie genre, the car chase earned perfection as a set piece in such films as *The French Connection* and *Bullitt*, and Lucas penned his own love letter to automotive culture in 1973's monster hit *American Graffiti*. The main difference between a traditional car chase and Episode II's high-speed traffic duel is that, in *Star Wars*, cars fly.

In fact, the cars operate more like miniature jet planes, dipping, gliding, and zooming through the three-dimensional airspace of Coruscant's Galactic City. The whole metropolis is sliced into constantly flowing grids like some right-angle map of the circulatory system, channeling the spirit of every futuristic society from H.G. Wells' *Things to Come* to *The Jetsons*. As Anakin and Obi-Wan turn the wrong way down one of these lanes, they trigger an avalanche of curses and near misses before they reach the less-congested electrified skies over Coruscant's industrial buildings.

The airspeeder that Anakin "borrows" from its parking slip on the apartment building's rooftop is canary yellow (a hue Anakin describes, in a line cut from the film, as "gonzo") and accelerates so



quickly that it's a wonder the Jedi apprentice doesn't suffer whiplash as he pulls out. But Anakin was weaned on Podracing, and his borrowed open-air hotrod can reach comparable speeds of up to 720 kilometers per hour. With its bright color and twin turbojet engines crammed under the hood, it even looks like a Podracer, albeit one that's been reconceived as a sub-compact.

According to *Attack of the Clones*, the Incredible Cross-Sections, the airspeeder Anakin takes belongs to the thrill-seeking Coruscant senator Simon Greyshade. Observant fans of the Expanded Universe will recognize this as a nod to Marvel Comics' classic *Star Wars* series, where an aging Greyshade operates a gambling station, *The Wheel*, under the indulgent eye of the Empire. Back during the time of Episode II, however, Senator Greyshade heads up a clique of rich politicians devoted to speeder modifications and high-speed racing. When Greyshade isn't busy representing the Vorzyd sector (the name comes from Russ Manning's old *Star Wars* newspaper strips in another bit of retro-continuity), he's ordering his mechanics to tighten his vehicle's turning radius or boost the tractor fields that hold passengers in their seats. The engines in Greyshade's hot-rod speeder originally came from a heavily armored repulsor-truck belonging to a bank.

THE VEHICLES OF EPISODE II



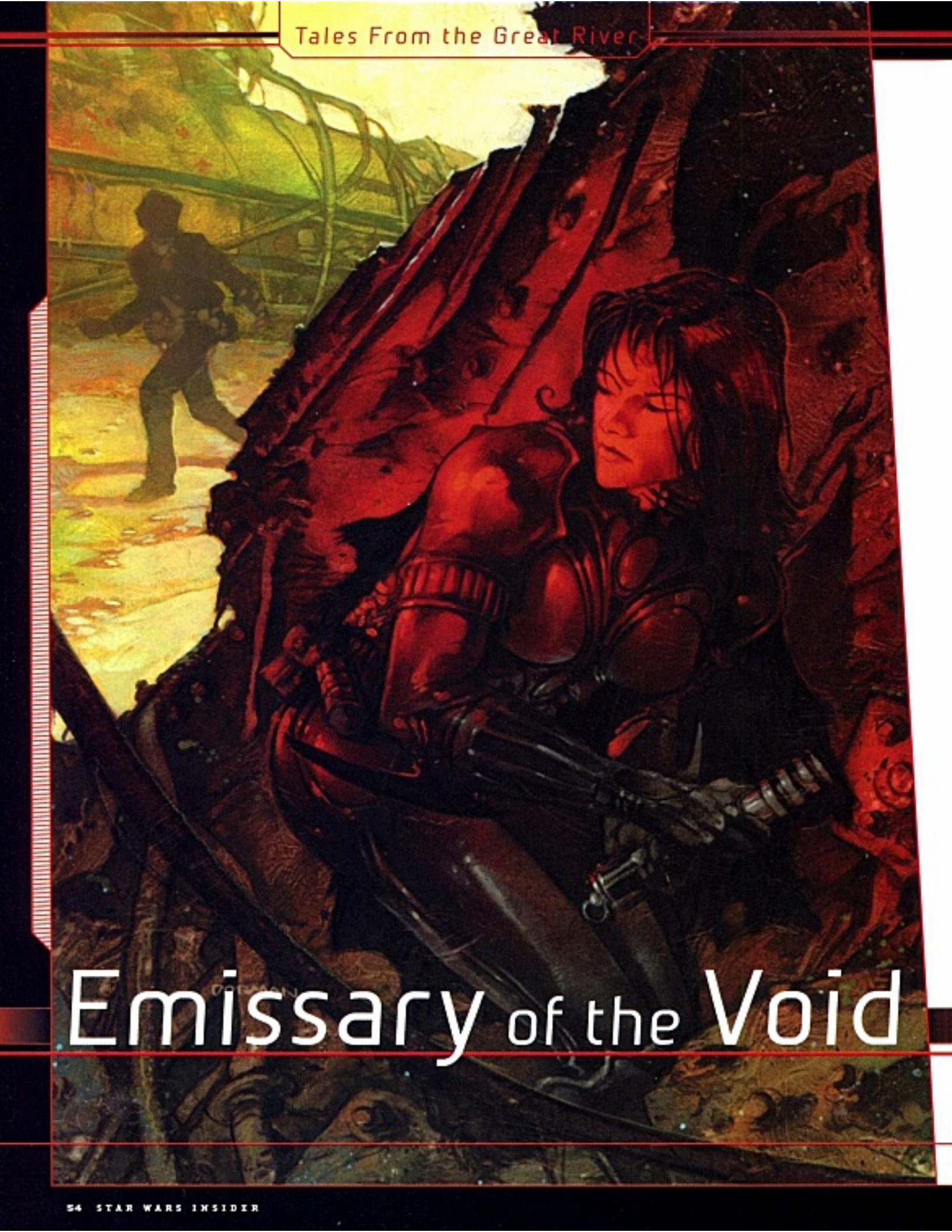
ZAM WESELL'S AIRSPEEDER

Bounty hunter Zam Wesell initiates the Coruscant car chase, and her airspeeder is completely different from Anakin's so the audience can distinguish them at a glance. The color is a subtle shade of green and the body so pointed it looks like a flying fork. "Zam's speeder consists of two to three character lines that not only have an element of simplicity, but also convey stealth and speed," explains concept designer Jay Shuster. During development of the vehicle, some wags in the art department took to calling it the "Woody Woodpecker ship," thanks to the beak and slicked-back hair suggested by its profile.

Zam's airspeeder is a Koro-2 Exodrive from the Desler Glitz Outworld Mobility Corporation. As befits its corporate moniker, the company makes vehicles for use on hostile backwater planets, and the Koro-2 sports a number of innovations designed to keep it airborne in thin or poisoned atmospheres. The cockpit is completely self-contained and employs its own life-support systems, while the craft's radioactive forward prongs ionize the air and force it backward to provide thrust. This unconventional propulsion method, perfectly adequate on the unpopulated frontier, produces gasses that can make bystanders sick. Like most other airspeeders on Coruscant, Zam's ride can reach altitudes of over three kilometers, and its top speed of 800 kilometers per hour is two-thirds the speed of sound. 🗡️



Tales From the Great River



Emissary of the Void

"I always figured I would see what killed me," Leaf said, scratching behind one ear with his right foot-hand.

"Well," Uldir said, absently, "you can see where it isn't."

Leaf snorted. "Human word games," he said. "We not only won't see anything, we won't feel anything. No way for a warrior to go. My mother always said I would come to a bad end, hanging around with humans."

"Well, nobody twisted your leg. Anyway, you were already destined for a bad end, no matter what company you kept," Uldir shrugged. "If it's any consolation, nobody knows exactly what you feel when you cross the singularity of a black hole. It might be extremely painful when every atom in your body collapses into neutrons. And since time virtually stops, it could last a really long time."

"You're trying to cheer me up."

"No, what I'm doing is trying to think of a way to keep it from happening at all, Leaf. There are over two hundred people on this ship. Maybe you should stop worrying about whether this is a worthy death for you and start—"

He turned at a sound behind him, raising his blaster. After all, they were on an enemy vessel. He thought they had accounted for all of the crew, but with the Yuuzhan Vong you never knew. The ship, like all of their tools, was a living organism. It probably had weird pockets and chambers everywhere that they hadn't noticed.

But the woman struggling through the shredded biolock of the slave transport's bridge was not Yuuzhan Vong; she was a short Corellian with platinum hair, a diamond-cutting gaze, and a blaster rifle.

"Hi, Vega," Uldir said. "Good work down there."

"Good work yourself. Explain to me again how we're falling into a black hole?"

"The pilot aimed us at it, then attacked Leaf. Leaf had to kill him." He gestured at one of the three scarred and mutilated bodies on the floor. The scars and mutilations were old ones—the Yuuzhan Vong cut themselves up as a sign of rank. What had killed the pilot were the three blaster bolts the Dug had put in him.

"So un-aim it," Vega recommended. "Change course."

Someone else was coming through the ruined portal behind Vega—a young woman with dark hair with bangs. Half-supported on her shoulder was a tall human male with a shock of red hair and emerald eyes. Uldir knew the woman—she was a Jedi, Klin-Fa Gi, and she was directly responsible for the mission that had led them to their present situation. He didn't know the man, but from the

way he and Klin-Fa were so chummy, he figured it was the Jedi they had come here to rescue.

"The pilot destroyed the cognition hood, too," he explained, trying to ignore the sudden sinking feeling in his belly.

Vega's brow folded. "There aren't any manual controls?"

"None that I know of. If you see any, be sure and let me know, though." He turned to the Jedi. "Klin-Fa, you've had a little more experience with Vong ships. What do you think?"

"The Yuuzhan Vong aren't much for back-up systems," she said.

"Probably think it's cowardly thinking, or some such idiocy," Vega snorted. "How about we get a tow? Vook's still out there with the *No Luck Required*. He should have enough power to divert us from this suicide course."

"Yes, although with the gravity well that thing has, that window is rapidly closing. Unfortunately, it's not an option right now—he's under attack."

"I thought he took care of all the coralskipper," Vega said.

Uldir shrugged. "Something else showed up. I'm not sure what, he didn't really have time to talk. But unless he beats them in the next ten minutes, we're on our own."

Tsaa Qalu snarled with satisfaction as he put his ship into a roll and prodded the plasma nacelles to disgorge. Red gobbets leapt out toward the infidel ship, *No Luck Required*.

"This pilot is quite good," he said. "He knows our ways."

"He is an infidel, sir," his subordinate reminded him.

"You deny his piloting skills, Laph Rapuung?" Tsaa Qalu grunted, as the dim was suddenly banded by viridian laser fire. That was no worry, the *Throat Slasher's* defensive voids should stop them all, but something didn't smell right.

A hunter lived by instinct. He yawned hard to upper port.

The cognition hood through which he flew the *Throat Slasher* made the ship seem as his own body, so when he changed direction violently he felt something akin to a twisted ankle. At the same time, he felt the surge of g-forces as the dovin basal taxed itself, unable to cancel all of the momentum from such an abrupt shift.

But it was a good move. Distracted by the laser barrage, he hadn't noticed the concussion missile falling in a long parabola from another quadrant. The infidel must have released it much earlier in the battle,

Emissary of the Void: Episode VI

by Greg Keyes — illustrated by Dave Dorman

To read the first three episodes of *Emissary of the Void*, originally presented in *Star Wars Gamer* issues 8, 9, and 10, check out starwars.com.

instructing it in this delayed maneuver. Even with his sudden course change, the detonation was almost too close. The blow briefly stunned the *Slasher*, sending it off in a flat spin. Slices of enemy light followed him, nipping off cubic meters of yorik coral hull before he regained control.

"Well, Rapuung?" he sneered. "Only the instincts given me by the gods saved us from that. Still you question his skill?"

"It is his machine, sir, not him."

"Bah. Their machines are lifeless and vulgar. Do you truly suggest that a machine nearly killed us? You would prefer that explanation to the simple acceptance that some infidel pilots have superior skill?"

"That is heresy, sir."

"It is not," Tsaa Qalu roared. "It is truth. Truth is essential to a hunter, Rapuung. If you underestimate the prey because you lie to yourself, you will become prey yourself. The infidels are corrupt, yes, and most are weak. But some are worthy, as they have proven time and time again. It is utterly foolish to say otherwise."

"But the priests—"

"The priests," Tsaa Qalu spat the word out as if it were poison.

He had the *No Luck Required* beneath his talons again. He gnashed his teeth and fired. This time a red flare of evaporating metal told him he had pierced the enemy shields.

"He may be a good pilot," Laph Rapuung conceded. "But he cannot match you."

"Of course not. I am a hunter, chosen by the gods for the cloak of the *nuun*."

"And now you will destroy him."

"Soon."

The villip before him choose that moment to configure into the face of Viith Yalu, the master Shaper on Wayland, the planet where this hunt had begun.

"Tsaa Qalu!" The Shaper demanded, as the villip tried to imitate the writhing tendrils of his headdress and thus convey the Master's agitation.

"Yes, Master Shaper."

"If you are not alone, send your subordinates away. I have something to discuss with you." There was something deeply grudging in his voice.

"I am in the middle of battle."

"Break off immediately, in that case. I must speak to you now."

"Very well," Qalu said, trying to keep his own rancor from showing. He changed the vector to take him farther from the infidel, firing a few parting shots. The ship did not follow but instead moved back toward the doomed slave transport.

"Leave us, Laph Rapuung," he said.

Uldir watched waxing nothingness with a growing sense of helplessness.

"Any ideas, people?" He asked. "Speak up."

"There is a possibility," the red-haired man croaked. They were the first words he had spoken.

"I'm sorry," Uldir said. "You are . . . ?"

Knowing full well whom it must be, the way he and Klin-Fa were playing cozy.

"Bey Gandan. A Jedi, like Klin-Fa."

Right. "You know some way to fly this ship?"

"I think so." He said. He winced and closed his eyes for a moment.

"Well, don't keep us in suspense," Vega said.

"He's hurt," Klin-Fa snapped. "Can't you see that? Give him a minute."

Nope, Uldir thought, *I do not like this guy*. He looked frankly at Bey. "No offense, but I thought you were in a coma," he said.

"He was," Klin-Fa explained. "I snapped him out of it with the Force. Do you want to survive, Uldir?"

"Please," Bey said. "Don't argue. I may pass out again, and I have to tell you this while I'm still coherent."

"Let him talk, Boss," Vega said. "It can't hurt at this point."

"Go on," Uldir said, vaguely ashamed of his attitude. But this guy had been rubbing him the wrong way before they met, and now . . .

"The coralskippers also have cognition hoods," Bey said. "They're linked, networked with the central control of this ship. If there's still a skip on board, you ought to be able to pilot the transport from there—remotely, so to speak."

"That's stupid," Leaf snapped. "Any coralskipper pilot can take over the ship at any time!"

Bey shook his head. "No, not if someone is under the central hood. But if it's out of commission, then yes, I believe so."

"Urr," Leaf barred his teeth. "And how is it you know so much about piloting Vong ships?"

"I've been their captive for a while," Bey said, mildly. "And I'm still only guessing. But I think it's the best shot you've got."

"It's worth a try," Uldir had to admit.

"Where are the skipper bays?" Vega asked. "I'll do it."

"They should be along the outer hull access corridor," Klin-Fa said. "Go back to the axial corridor and take any major artery away from center."

"Fine," Vega replied. "Wish me luck." She turned to leave.

"No," Leaf growled. "I'll try it. And if it doesn't work . . ."

"If it doesn't work, you'll think uncharitable thoughts for a few seconds, at best," Klin-Fa said.

"Don't tempt me, Jedi," Leaf returned, glaring.

Klin-Fa returned the angry stare dispassionately.

"Go, Leaf, if you're going," Uldir said. "And may the Force be with you."

Leaf rolled his eyes and without another word loped out of the chamber.

"Are you sure it's wise to entrust him with this?" Klin-Fa asked, once the Dug was out of earshot.

Uldir studied the young Jedi. He noticed she was gripping Bey, almost as if she was afraid he might leave her again.

"You think you can fly better than Leaf?" He asked.

"No. But I think you can. And his anger—"

"The Yuuzhan Vong are pretty angry," Uldir said. "I don't think that will confuse this ship any."

"Six minutes, boss-boy," Vega said. "Then it doesn't matter who is flying the ship—we'll be too deep in the gravity well to ever climb out."

Uldir nodded and returned his gaze to the transparency. Leaft had been right—they couldn't see the black hole and never would. But as he'd said, you could see where it wasn't—a corona of luminescent gas and iron particles surrounded it in a bluish nimbus. It looked like the pupil of a giant large enough to swallow a star system.

He noticed Vega had edged a little closer. "You think he can do it?" she whispered.

It sounded weird, coming from Vega. Vega never flinched. He had never imagined she even gave death a second thought. But then—like Leaft—she was used to facing down danger with a blaster. It was different to fall helplessly into nothingness. It was why he'd let Leaft be the one to make the attempt—another few seconds without action and the Dug would have made his own.

Leaft snarled and spat to himself as he ran through the living corridors of the Yuuzhan Vong ship. His anger beat in him like one of the old Y'd drums of the thorp elders, like an ancient Gran-killing song. Like sonic boom after sonic boom.

The boss had gone mad; there was no doubt about that. As revolting as the human female was, she had still managed to drive him mad—whether the cause was pheromones or the so-called Force, he

Maybe it wasn't the boss who was stupid. Maybe he was. Maybe he should have gotten better instructions.

"Where are you?" He howled. He bounced farther down the corridor. Nothing.

In sheer frustration, he yanked out his blasters and started firing. Shreds of mycoluminescent bulkhead filled the air, along with a smell like burning meat and seaweed.

Panting, he sank onto his hands. They'd had it.

And then, quite silently, holes opened in the walls, each about a meter wide.

"Don't know what I'm about, eh?" Leaft snarled. "I'll show them."

The holes were the mouths of tubes. Most didn't go very far and ended in opacity—after all, the transport had launched most of its skips to fight the *No Luck Required*. But after a frantic footfall of seconds he found one that went back into a little grotto. He hastened down it and found something like a cross between the inside of a starfighter and the rotting carcass of a rancor. There was a seat, though, and he hopped in. The cognition hood dangled above him, and he grabbed it and pushed it down over his ears and head.

And it started talking to him. In Yuuzhan Vong.

He felt his ears flatten back. He wanted to yank the thing off, get those voices out of his head, but he had to do this, to prove—

Prove nothing. He was Leaft, a Dug, a warrior. He had nothing to prove. He just had to do this, save the boss, save Vega.

Are you sure it's wise to entrust him with this?

did not know. And Vega, she was acting stupid too, like someone had taken her wilf-skimmer. If she wanted the boss, why didn't she just puff out her skin and take him? She was strong enough.

Not that Leaft ever, ever wanted to see a human female or male puff out their skin.

Of course, they didn't do that, did they? No inflating for them. No decent, straightforward announcement of a desire to mate. Instead, they drove each other crazy with words and then pulled idiotic stunts to impress one another. It was as if nature had turned on humans, favoring procreation of the foolish over selection of the fittest.

And, yes, maybe there was some sort of threat to the galaxy, or whatever. Did that justify this kind of behavior?

Even if he managed to pull them out of this—like he had back at Wayland, when he'd thought to go out and hook up the fuel line to that old ship—even if he did that, in under a standard hour they'd been deep in some other sarlacc pit, because every human on the ship was swept up in this mating frenzy.

He stopped, whipping around. Where were the stupid coral-skippers? He thought he was in the right corridor. They were on the outside of the ship, but there had to be some way in to them from here, some docking mechanism.

He started pounding on the walls. How much time did he have left anyway?

He remembered hearing it was a lot easier to fly one of these things if you knew the language, but it had been done before without that knowledge, and by a human. For him it should be no trouble at all.

He closed his eyes.

"Flyt" he said. "Reverse engines!"

Nothing happened, except his legs felt funny and the voice was growing louder in his head.

"Fly, you stupid thing!"

Nothing.

Frustrated, he stamped his foot.

G-forces smashed him back into the couch, and suddenly he saw stars—and the transport, receding.

That was a start. The wrong start.

"No!" He yelled at the hood. "Not the 'skip, the transport!"

He fought down panic. The circle of nothingness was very near.

But then he understood. The 'skip wasn't obeying his thoughts—it couldn't understand them. But it understood his body, his voluntary nerve impulses.

He closed his eyes again, flexed his manipulating digits, and the 'skip went into a spin. He grunted happily. He could control the 'skip. But how to take control of the transport?

"Well," he mused aloud, "If the 'skip is like my body, what's the transport to me?"

Another body? Right. And that voice. The one trying to talk to him—that would be the coordinating device or whatever they called it.

He focused on the voice, and began talking to it, reaching for it, stretching...

He touched something, but it slipped away. Biting back another yowl of frustration, he reached again—

And got it. Suddenly his body seemed bigger, and he could feel himself pushing, pushing toward the black hole, because the last pilot had left the drive on.

So Leafa needed to push away.

So he did, and agony tore at him. The momentum was too great to simply check, even with the Yuuzhan Vong gravity drive. It would tear him—the transport—apart.

Of course, he was a pilot—he ought to know he couldn't just reverse his way out of a black hole. So he had to angle, keep going toward the hole but angle, just keep above the event horizon, stay away from where space curved into a perfect circle.

He was panting. At this range, even a small course change was hard. But it was happening, it was happening, but fast enough? He wasn't sure.

The sick thing was, he was starting to enjoy flying the thing. Controls couldn't move a ship like this, couldn't make it respond the way your very muscles would. He felt like he was running down

sleep they'd been clenched so tight. He slapped Vega on the back, and in a woozy instant realized it had somehow turned into a hug.

Vega realized it too, and she stepped back, her eyes avoided his. "Let's not get carried away, huh?"

"Yeah." He cast a glance at Klin-Fa and Bey. He was sitting down, now, in one of the chair-things, and Klin-Fa stood by herself, her face flushed, relieved—and something else. Again, Uldir felt movement in the Force, something so big even his diminished senses could sense it.

Something wrong.

"What was that?" He asked, before he thought better of it.

"What was what?"

"Something in the Force."

"I didn't feel anything."

Uldir stared at her for a moment. "I guess I was wrong," he murmured. "Must just have been the relief."

"I thought the ship would pull apart for a while there," Bey said. "But I have to admit, your guy did it."

"He couldn't have managed it off without your help," Uldir said. "Thank you."

The Jedi smiled faintly. "I hoped it would work. I felt it would."

"Before this love fest goes to far, we ought to check on Vook," Vega reminded them.

"Oh, right," Uldir pulled out his comlink.

"Vook, you there?"

He didn't like the idea of going out without feeling it.

a funnel, already so fast that if he tried to stop he would fall over himself and plunge to where the deepening slope of the funnel became a sheer drop. He had to run so his momentum carried him along the wall of the funnel, not down it. That would be an orbit.

He managed it, his muscles screaming, but it wasn't enough to simply orbit. He had to get away, to go back up to the rim, and over it—without all of his limbs tearing from their sockets.

Gravity clenched at him, and he heard the dovin basal's silent scream of protest as they slowed, slowed—

And sped up again.

Leafa howled with pain and joy. He howled at the dead star that could not beat him. He howled to live.

And because he had done it.

He relaxed, and his body felt small again. For a long moment he sat there, blinking and confused, because the black hole was still there, larger than ever. The transport wasn't there any more, though. Well, no, there it was, accelerating away...

"Oh, flupp," Leafa groaned.

His mother had been right, after all.

"Here, captain," Vook promptly replied.

"How's your situation?"

"Not bad. The enemy craft retreated a few moments ago. We've taken only minor damage. I see you got the transport working."

"Yep. Leafa's flying it. Can you meet us?"

"Yes, sir, I have you on scope. Distance—555,892 kilometers."

"I'll have Leafa alter course to meet you."

"Very good, sir."

"Leafa, you copy that?"

But from the Dug's comlink, there was no signal whatever.

"Boss, give it up," Vega said, her voice as soft as it ever got.

Uldir blinked his eyes at the stars. "It's only been a few hours. He could be anywhere."

"It looks like the coralskipper he was in launched. Boss—Uldir—there's no way a skip had the power to escape the gravity well at that range."

Uldir felt his jaw lock. "I should have done it."

"That's stupid, and you know it. He got the job done. The same would have probably have happened with any of us, except that if you had done it, it would have left me in charge. That wouldn't be any good at all."

"He did it!" Vega shouted. "We're out! We're clear!"

Uldir realized he was shouting, too, and that his fingers had gone to

"You did fine when you were in charge back in the Wayland system."
"Maybe, but I hated it. I don't like command."

"Really?" Uldir said, feeling very cold. "Well, neither do I. I like flying. I like the job. But being responsible..." He gasped, fighting the tears back. "I am responsible, Vega. I have to be. I'm in charge. I brought us here."

"Leaft was responsible too. He knew that. We all know it. Come on, Boss. Is this really the first crewmember you've lost? The first friend?"

"No. No. Not by a long shot. I even had to kill one once—at least I thought he was my friend. But that was his choice. Leaft died because of my choices." He swung on her. "And they've all been wrong, haven't they? Every decision I've made since meeting Klin-Fa Gi has been wrong."

"No."

"What? You've disagreed with me every step of the way."

"Yeah. But you were right, I was wrong. You've been so torn up about Leaft you haven't looked at what the Jedi found on Wayland. It's bad, and we have to stop it. We might not be able to as it is, but if we spend another hour looking for Leaft, that's an hour less we have to do what we can. You want Leaft's death to have meaning? Then quit moping and get us moving."

"To where?"

"Thyferra. They've found a way to destroy bacta—and worse."

Uldir stiffened. "Right," he said, wearily. "Let's go. But when this is over—"

"Save that for when it is over, Boss," Vega said.

"Sure." He glanced back at the stellar panorama, where their rotation was bringing the black hole back into view.

"I hope it hurt," he whispered.

"What?"

"He didn't like the thought of going out without feeling it."

She nodded. "That's Leaft."

He turned to go, and noticed that Vega's eyes were catching the light from the control panel. They glistened.

Relieved to be back aboard the *No Luck Required*, Uldir found Bey and Klin-Fa hunched over something that looked like a sphere with short, stumpy tentacles. The tentacles writhed, slightly. On the surface of the sphere itself, odd symbols formed and dissipated.

Klin-Fa looked up. "Hi," she said, softly. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Uldir brusquely replied. "I've laid in a course for Thyferra. Now tell me why exactly."

"The slave ship?"

"Vook's flying it. He had the same problem Leaft must have had, but he figured out how to correct for it. When we finally raise someone, we'll have them taken off our hands. Now, what have you got there?"

Bey spoke up. "What the Yuuzhan Vong found on Wayland was a biochemical sequencing of Bacta. At some point the Emperor must have been considering neutralizing it, but his scientists never got that far. The Yuuzhan Vong did." He pointed to

the screen. "They've developed an agent, something like a virus. It attacks the alazhi plant bacta is made from."

"It kills it?"

"No, something much more subtle. The virus mimics the active chemicals and bacteria in alazhi and then goes quiescent. Absolutely undetectable, unless you know exactly what to look for. It stays there when it's brewed with kavam to produce bacta. But when the bacta is introduced into a living subject, it activates at a low level. It's a sort of time bomb. A few weeks after bacta treatment, the subject drops dead in a few hours. They've tested it on a wide sampling of species already. There's no cure, and no reversing the process. Once infected, the alazhi plants will pass the virus on genetically. You see what this means?"

Uldir nodded. "Everyone uses Bacta. We've been using it so long, it's replaced most conventional medicine."

"Exactly. If they had gotten away with this without anyone knowing, imagine the number of injured who would have been infected."

"Millions, maybe, if there's a new Yuuzhan Vong offensive," Uldir said.

"Which the evidence points to," Vega added.

"Yeah, this isn't good," Uldir allowed. "How is this virus being delivered?"

"That's a little fuzzy," Klin-Fa admitted. "But from what we've got here, my best guess would be an operative. The virus spreads very quickly. If it was introduced to one of the major alazhi plantations, it would infect the whole planet in days."

"They might have already done it," Vega observed.

"They might have," Klin-Fa conceded, "but I don't think so. There's a timetable here. It looks like we have about forty hours."

"We can make Thyferra in thirty," Uldir said. "But then we still have to find the agent carrying the virus. Considering the Yuuzhan Vong ability to disguise themselves—it sounds impossible."

"We start with the largest, most centrally located plantations," Bey said. "The only good thing about not being able to sense the Yuuzhan Vong in the Force is that it makes it easier to pick them out when they're disguised. It's like they're not there."

"It's worth a try," Uldir said. "Meanwhile, we get the word out. If we fail, at least they'll know not to use bacta from now on."

"The loss of bacta is going to be a hard blow to recover from, especially in wartime," Vega observed.

"True," Uldir said. "So we don't let it happen. We stop them. Keep on the hyperwave and HoloNet. Let somebody know what's going on. We need help on this, and if something happens to us, this secret can't die with us."

"Will do, Boss," Vega replied.

"Are you busy?"

Uldir turned from the controls and saw Klin-Fa standing in the entrance to the bridge. She was just brushing her dark bangs from her eyes, and something went odd in his chest.

"Where's your friend?" He asked.

"Sleeping. He's still not in very good shape."

"What happened to him?"

"He's not sure. Something that hurt a lot, that's all he remembers."

"Well, those are the Yuuzhan Vong we all know and love. 'Life is pain.' Sometimes I think they're right."

"Life is a lot of things," Klin-Fa said. "Pain is certainly one of them, but it's not the sum of it." Her voice lowered. "I'm sorry about the Dug."

"His name was Leaf, Uldir said, more harshly than he meant to. "And yeah, so am I."

"It wasn't for nothing."

"Thanks, but that doesn't really help."

"I know. I lost a friend, too," she paused. "There were three of us, originally. Bey, me, and Yabaley."

"I heard you say that name back on Bonadan. When you killed the Yuuzhan Vong warrior."

"Yes."

"You were angry."

"He was my friend. He..." Her gaze flicked off, as if seeking advice from someone in the corner. "He was more than a friend, really. The Yuuzhan Vong killed him not long after we were captured. They tortured him to death. I felt him die."

Uldir felt his cheeks grow warm with shame. "I'm sorry. I knew something..."

"I know what you think. Back on Wayland, you made it clear you thought I had gone over to the dark side."

Uldir nodded. He had studied at Master Skywalker's Jedi academy but had shown no real talent for the Force. Still, he sometimes had some sensitivity to the Force, and he had an odd sort of luck it was difficult to put down to mere chance.

"I sensed something dark on Wayland," he said. "And on Bonadan. I thought it was you."

"Wayland's seen a lot of the dark side. I felt shadows there too. Bonadan—well, I think I came close, Uldir. I felt it—the power of the dark side, the attraction of it. I wanted to kill them all. But I stepped away from it."

"I'm glad to hear that."

"You helped."

"I don't see how."

"You're a decent guy. You may not be strong in the Force, but there are more important things than that. You've got a lot of them. I was starting to go a little crazy. Everywhere I went, everyone I turned to ended up being stupid or corrupt or an enemy. You didn't. I—ah—I guess you renewed my faith, or something."

"I wish that had translated into trust a little earlier on," Uldir said.

"I'm trying to thank you."

"I know. I appreciate that. I just—" he pursed his lips angrily. "Why did you kiss me?"

Her eyes widened, and then she chuckled. "That sure came from a hidden vector." She folded her arms across her chest. "I kissed you because I wanted to."

"Because I'm a decent guy."

"Sure."

He stood up and took a step toward her. She seemed to hug herself harder. "And what if I kissed you?"

She looked away. "That's not such a good idea, right now. Bey—"

"Right," Uldir murmured, turning away.

"If you'll let me explain—"

"We're reverting to realspace," Uldir said. "It'll have to wait. And you don't owe me any explanations anyway."

She was starting to say something else when the stars came back—the stars and more.

"Sithspit!" Klin-Fa gasped.

Uldir didn't say anything—he just punched the ion drive to maximum and put the ship into a spin to avoid the Yuuzhan Vong frigate he was about to smash into. He managed it, barely, but space was thick with ships, laser fire, and plasma trails.

"What's going on?" Vega came rushing in from the back.

"We dropped into the middle of a battle, looks like," Uldir grunted, unnecessarily.

"Where are we?"

"The Yag'Dhul system," he replied, as the ship shuddered under the impact of a plasma projectile. "I was staging our last jump from here. Looks

They plan to destroy

like the ceasefire has been broken. We're at war with the Vong again."

"I'd say so," Vega said, dryly. She shot Klin-Fa a nasty look. "Move over, sweetness. I need the copilot's seat."

Klin-Fa moved silently away.

"Work out the last jump, before we get fried," Uldir said.

"I'm working," Vega said. "Yag'Dhul is a complex system. All those moons. At least we don't have the transport to worry about any more."

"True." They'd left the transport and the refugees on it in what Uldir hoped was neutral space, fearing they might run into a situation like this.

Well, not like this. What he'd feared was an interdicator or something, not a whole vaping fleet.

Uldir opened up with the forward guns and keyed on the intercom. "Leaf—" then he stopped cold.

"It's okay boss," Vega said, without looking up. "I was wondering why he wasn't in the turret too."

But then the turret did begin firing. Not with Leaf's dead-sure accuracy, but a coralskipper exploded in incandescence.

"Who's down there?" Uldir asked.

"That would be me," Klin-Fa's voice came back.

"Good going. Keep it up. Uvee, how are things?"

Systems deteriorating, the astromech droid's translator screen read.

"Well, what else is new?" Uldir muttered, just as a Yuuzhan Vong ship swung into view. Upwards of fifty coralskippers detached and started their way.

"Vega?"

"Almost there," she said, distractedly.

The skips fell into several wedges. Uldir began to wonder who the Yuuzhan Vong were fighting exactly—at the moment he didn't see any ships that weren't enemies.

The skips approached firing range.

"Got it, boss. Go."

He went.

Their next reversion was entirely uneventful. They appeared a few hundred thousand clicks from Thyferra—right on the dot in galactic terms.

"There's still no word from Skywalker or anyone else," Vega told him.

"Small wonder. There's a war going on."

Vega shook her head. "It's more than that. I did manage to get a news summary from the HoloNet. Master Skywalker was ordered arrested. He fled Coruscant and went into hiding."

Uldir whistled. "I knew Borsk Fey'lya was stupid, but that's really stupid. How does he think the New Republic can possibly win this war without the Jedi?"

"The Yuuzhan Vong promised that if all of the Jedi were delivered to them the war would end, remember?"

mildly. "We screen off-worlders carefully, and I do not think a Yuuzhan Vong could masquerade as one of us, no matter how clever the disguise."

"True," Uldir agreed. Their host was a Vratix. His body was hook-shaped, his insect-like head set on a long slender neck on the long end of the hook. He looked down at Uldir from a height of nearly two meters. His two back limbs were enormously muscular and bent the wrong way—twice. The spiked forelimbs were also twice jointed. "But Yuuzhan Vong biotechnology—"

"Might be able to produce our form, though that is highly doubtful. But we also communicate by scent and touch, and by the mind-to-mind. Could all of this be convincingly duplicated? We would know. Our bacta production is not without security precautions. Saboteurs have come here before."

"They might be using a Vratix," Vega pointed out. "They could have captured one of your people and brainwashed him."

"Even less likely that we would not notice such a thing. His intent would be known by the mind-to-mind."

"But you do have humanoid employees, don't you?" Uldir persisted.

"Not many. Since we expelled the off-world cartels many years ago, we have employed mostly our own people."

"That might actually make it easier," Bey put in. "You're right, the

bacta—all of it—and they will if you don't take us seriously.

"Yeah, right. That's why they're taking Yag'Dhul even as we speak."

A light blipped on the console. "The Thyferrans are asking what our business in their system is."

Uldir sighed. "Tell them. Give them our highest priority clearance code. If that doesn't work, we go in without them. There's no time to lose. The operative is probably already here."

An hour later they were planetside, in an old building that recalled Imperial architecture. The office they stood in had been opened to the air on two sides, furnished with potted plants and trailing vines and wickerwork furniture not designed for humanoid frames, but the harsh, industrial lines of the structure still peeked through.

"It's quite impossible," Xeshen Kra was saying, clicking the three fingers of one hand and touching Uldir's shoulder with another. His skin had changed from a light gray to mauve since Uldir's arrival, and while he remembered that signified a shift in emotion, he had no idea what particular emotion mauve signified.

"Our intelligence was stolen directly from the Yuuzhan Vong," Klin-Fa pointed out. "They plan to destroy bacta—all of it—and they will if you don't take us seriously."

The Xeshen Kra didn't blink—he couldn't, for there were no lids on his bulbous black eyes—but Uldir got that impression, nevertheless.

"And yet how could this scheme be carried out?" Kra asked,

Yuuzhan Vong agent is almost certainly disguised as a humanoid. If there aren't many humanoids working in Bacta production, it makes our job of checking them much simpler."

The Vratix considered that for a moment, continuing to paw Uldir's arm.

"Very well," he said at last. "I still doubt this threat, but it will do little harm to do as you propose."

"Good," Uldir said. "Where should we start?"

Xeshen Kra turned to her assistant, who had a portable database.

"We should check the most recent arrivals first," Vega said. "Anyone who was just hired or has recently returned from off-planet."

The assistant consulted the pad for a moment, then looked up.

"The alazhi fields at Vrelnid are nearby. They are vast, and there are a number of humanoid technicians there. Two have begun work there in the past week." He released Uldir's arm. "We can take my flier," he added.

During the flight, Uldir distractedly watched the alternation of jungle and field.

Vega moved near. "What's wrong?" She asked.

"I don't know. Something seems wrong about this."

"Such as?"

"If our hypothetical saboteur is already here, his work is already done—the bacta is infected."

"Right, but maybe not all of it. They can burn the infected fields."

"True. It's just..." He shrugged. "Just a feeling."

The fields at Vrelnid were indeed vast, though Uldir wouldn't have really called them fields, just a lower sort of jungle, rambling off from the

base of a small mountain range. The processing plant was modest, a few buildings outside of a ring-walled Vratix village. He saw that the humanoid workers were already assembled near the landing pad.

"This bio-weapon," Xeshen Kra asked, as they circled in. "Do you know the mode of delivery?"

"Not the primary mode, no," Klin-Fa said. "It might be in some sort of aerosol container. Once introduced, the plants themselves begin producing it in the form of spores. The spores are not only airborne but also self-motivated. They'll seek out the chemical signature of alazhi plants."

"It would spread very quickly, then?" The Vratix asked.

"Very," Bey said. "That's why we need to catch the agent before he can begin the introduction."

The flier touched down and its landing ramp extended. The four humans and two Vratix descended to the packed brown earth. Three humans, a Twi'lek, and a Neimoidian watched them approach with puzzled expressions.

"What's this all about?" One of the humans—a small woman with blond hair asked.

someone to poison the bacta?"

"The bacta plague is a Shaper initiative," Klin-Fa said. "Maybe they didn't know about the military invasion—the warriors would plan that. Or maybe it's a back up, in case the fleet is defeated at Yag'Dhul."

The kneeling Yuuzhan Vong collapsed, finally overcome by shock.

"Wait," Uldir said. "That means this guy isn't—"

"Where did Bey go?" Vega asked.

"What?" Uldir swung his head around, looking.

"Oh, no," Klin-Fa said. "Oh, no."

"Vaping Moffs," Uldir said. "It's Bey, isn't it? He's the agent."

"I—the Vong must have done something to him."

"You suspected this?" Vega snarled.

"No—I mean, I knew there was something wrong with him. He kept closed to me. But sometimes I felt—"

"Something dark," Uldir finished. "It was him, not you."

She closed her eyes. "It must be true."

"Question?" Vega asked. "Why are we still discussing this?"

"You're right. We have to find him, and fast."

"The fields," Klin-Fa said. "He can't have gone far."

"Split up," Uldir commanded.

You are my prey, nothing more. I honored you by giving yo

"Yes," the Neimoidian said. "Why is our time being wasted?"

"And why the security troops?" A second human—a sandy-haired man—said. "We aren't criminals."

"We apologize for the inconvenience," Uldir said, "but it's necessary. And it won't take long. Klin-Fa? Bey?"

The two Jedi nodded and stepped forward.

"Really," the Neimoidian said. "Aren't we even due an explanation?"

Xeshen Kra waved his hands. "These Jedi believe there is a threat to the bacta. All will be explained in time."

"He's not there," Klin-Fa said, pointing at the man who had just spoken.

Before the words left her mouth, the fellow was already in motion, leaping straight for Uldir's throat, shouting something in the all-too-recognizable Yuuzhan Vong language.

He was fast. Vega was faster. Her blaster rifle came up and whined. Uldir's attacker snarled and staggered as a bolt struck him in the sternum, but he did not stop. Uldir raised his hands to defend himself and tried to step back, but he bumped into Xeshen Kra. A fist slammed into his guard and through it, catching him hard on the side of the jaw. Then the hands were on his head, and he felt his neck twist. He vaguely heard the snap-hiss of a lightsaber, and was suddenly free as the hands—and the arms they were attached to—fell away. Klin-Fa stood there, her yellow lightsaber held at guard. The man—Yuuzhan Vong, rather—fell to his knees, gaping at the stumps of his arms.

"Infidels," he snarled. "You are too late. The hinges of this fortress are already weak. Our fleet sweeps through it like flame."

"Fleet?" Uldir said. "The fleet we saw back at Yag'Dhul? It's staging for an attack on Thyferra?" He frowned at Klin-Fa. "Then why would they send

Klin-Fa had already started off at a dead run. Uldir chose another direction, but Vega tugged at his sleeve. "You still trust her?" she asked. "What if she's just going to help him?"

"Then we're in very deep trouble," Uldir replied. "Now go. And be careful. If he is what I think he is—"

"Yeah," Vega started off, too.

Leafa woke in a foul mood. His head hurt, his nose itched—and, oh, yes—his limbs were glued to a wall with some kind of goo.

Bloorash jelly, he figured, because that's what the Yuuzhan Vong used to hold captives, and he was clearly still on the Yuuzhan Vong ship.

What had happened to the Boss and the others? Had they been captured? Had they left him here? He yanked at the jelly until his limbs started to spasm, and then tried to quiet himself. It wasn't easy, but he had to think.

He'd been in a coralskipper. He'd been falling into a black hole, and then something had grabbed the 'skip, a counter-force pulling it back—then nothing.

But he didn't think this was the slave transport either. It was another ship; maybe the one Vook had been fighting.

"Where are you cowards?" He shouted at the top of his lungs. "Where are you, you brave Yuuzhan Vong? I've killed a thousand of your kind and never seen one's face yet—" he took wind for more air, "—because you're always running the other way!"

Then he jerked at the jelly some more.

A few moments later, someone came into the room. He was

Yuuzhan Vong, of course. A black web tattoo covered his face, centered on the two holes that passed for a nose. His ears had been sliced into three lobes, and he had three holes in each cheek. He was rangy, almost wiry for a Yuuzhan Vong, and tall.

"Pray," he said, in Basic.

"I'm not religious," Leaft informed him. "But you ought to take your own advice and ask your mangy, mother-beating coward-gods to have pity on you, because once I'm free of this stuff—"

The Yuuzhan Vong smiled and raised some sort of staff. It spat at Leaft's wrist and ankles, and the stuff holding him suddenly dissolved. With a yowl, Leaft leapt at the Yuuzhan Vong, swinging up for a powerful kick.

But when his hand-feet got there, the enemy wasn't. He'd moved aside, blindingly fast. Or, no, he wasn't there at all. Leaft turned this way and that, snarling.

Then the wall punched him in the head so hard that for an instant he thought that his eyes had been pushed together. He stumbled, and the Yuuzhan Vong was there again, swinging, hitting him in his dorsal diaphragm so he suddenly had hard vacuum in his lungs. A final kick sent him into the wall, where all sorts of things seemed to snap.

Wheezing, Leaft tried feebly to rise.

the opportunity to attack me.

"Prey, not pray, infidel," the Yuuzhan Vong said. "You are my prey, nothing more. I honored you by giving you the opportunity to attack me. It was clearly more honor than you deserved."

Leaft tried to retort, but he was still failing to breathe.

"I am Tsaa Qalu, a hunter," the Yuuzhan Vong went on. "Do you understand? I have tracked you from Wayland. I am still tracking the rest of your pack."

"Why?" Leaft managed to cough out.

"Get up. I will show you."

"I can't. You've broken one of my arms."

"Ah. Is that so?" He took a step closer and pointed. "This one?"

"Yes."

He kicked it, hard. Leaft screamed what he thought was a suitably loud scream. It wasn't that difficult, since it really was broken.

"Embrace the pain, infidel, for you will never draw breath again without it."

"Eat my neck dung," Leaft suggested.

"Come." The Yuuzhan Vong grasped him by his good arm and yanked him up as if he were made of *pfith*-thistle. He dragged him from the cell and into a corridor, hustled him past a couple of coralskipper docks, though a dilating membrane and into another hall. They passed one more door and entered what Leaft recognized as a bridge. Another Yuuzhan Vong sat with a cognition hood on his head.

Through a transparency, Leaft could see the curve of a large green-and-blue planet.

"Your nestmates are down there," Tsaa Qalu said. "They have with

them one who has seen the wisdom and rightness of our ways."

"A traitor? The girl?"

The Yuuzhan Vong dismissed the question with the back of his hand against Leaft's face. It stung, but next to his other pains, it was nothing.

"I am speaking, infidel. He has embraced the Truth. The Shapers sent him here to do a thing, a thing that will hasten our victory. I do not know what. I do not care." He snarled and clutched his hands behind his back. "The Shapers did not bother to inform me of this thing. Two of you invaded our territory on Wayland. I followed, sensing a good hunt. Only when I had your ship in my claws did the Shapers tell me their plan, knowing that I would spoil it by killing you all." He grimaced. "Shapers. They know nothing of honor. They should have given this task to me to carry out, but they prefer to work in secret, to keep things from the other castes and even other Shaper sects so they do not have to share the spoils of battle. Many are heretics, as well." He shrugged. "But no matter, the hunt was begun. I merely altered the time of the kill. I had to stop you from plunging the slave-ship into the singularity so that the Shaper agent would not die."

"What are you talking about?" Leaft muttered. "I saved the transport." His arm was really hurting now. He was starting to worry he might black out.

"A near miracle," Tsaa Qalu said. "I gave you the knowledge. The Shaper's agent has a small villip implanted in his skull. Through it, I told him what to do. And yet still you almost failed."

The planet below was growing larger. "So what now?" Leaft asked, wearily.

"The agent's task is complete," Tsaa Qalu said. "But he has been discovered. So, I will now kill everyone who has learned of the Shaper plan. According to the agent, most such are all in one place. It should not be difficult to track those who remain. We will be there in a few moments."

"Hah. You and this guy are going to beat the boss? Think again."

"I won't fight them hand-to-hand, though that would be glorious. No, I must be efficient and certain. I have weapons that can easily neutralize any sentient in the area. It will be no trouble at all."

"You forgot one thing," Leaft said.

"What's that?"

"You have to kill me first."

And ignoring the pain, Leaft gathered his three functioning limbs and sprang.

Uldir felt something in the Force: A shadow, but a familiar one. He was certain it was the same dark presence he had sensed several times before. He imagined if he had real Jedi potential it wouldn't be so intangible but like a giant laser display pointing the way. As it was, it gave him only the vaguest sense of direction. Bey could be a meter away, hidden in the undergrowth, or half a kilometer away.

Was it Bey he sensed? The Jedi hadn't been on Bonadan, had he? Well,

maybe he had. How long ago had the Yuuzhan Vong broken him?

But the only Jedi he knew for sure had been on Bonadan was Klin-Fa. What if Vega was right? What if they had both gone dark? It made a certain amount of sense—if the Yuuzhan Vong could break one of them, they could break both.

He heard something up ahead and moved even more cautiously.

The sound was gone, now, though. So was his sense of a dark presence.

Then he heard the hum of a lightsaber igniting, only a few foot-steps away. He whirled and saw Klin-Fa, her face set in grim lines. Her blade cut toward him. With a yelp he dropped and rolled. She flew past, her blade shearing through undergrowth. He came up on one knee, brought his blaster to bear—

—and saw her real target as her amber blade met Bey's crimson one in a shear of sparks. Bey must have been hidden less than an arm's length from Uldir.

He pulled out his comlink with one hand and tried to draw a bead with his blaster with the other.

"Vega, I found him. Hurry!"

Klin-Fa was a whirlwind. Bits of alazhi plants flew everywhere, and her blade was an arcing blur. Bey seemed unconcerned, parrying easily and returning blows that missed Klin-Fa by quantum increments. He was clear for a moment, and Uldir snapped off a shot. The Jedi parried it without even glancing his way, sending the bolt burning off through the underbrush.

"It's too late," Bey informed them. "It's already done. The spores were in me. They were released from my pores. It's all around you, now."

Klin-Fa drew back to a guard position. Uldir could see tears streaming down her face.

"What did they do to you, Bey? How did they turn you into—this?"

The redheaded Jedi laughed. "You think the Yuuzhan Vong did this to me?"

"You were their captive for—"

He grinned. "I was never their captive. You were."

"What do you mean? We escaped, and then—"

"All part of the plan," he said. "Everything that's happened up until now, all planned."

"I don't understand."

"Well, I didn't understand you and Yabaley. What did you see in him? I was always stronger, smarter. He didn't deserve you."

"I loved him."

"And not me. And in my whole life, that's all I ever really wanted. And I'll never have it, will I? So I'll settle. I'll settle for helping the Yuuzhan Vong burn this all down, and then maybe I'll kill them too. Or maybe I'll rule them."

"Wow," Uldir said. "You have the most amazing mental image of yourself. Too bad it has nothing to do with reality."

"You're an insect," Bey sighed. He flipped his hand casually, and a searing pain struck Uldir between the eyes.

"No!" he heard Klin-Fa shout. She leapt at Bey, blade cutting down. Through a fog of pain, Uldir saw Bey parry, and then somehow Klin-Fa's

weapon was flipping end-over end through the air. She gasped in pain and clutched at her right hand, which seemed to be missing several fingers. Bey had his weapon cocked for the final cut. Klin-Fa drew her shoulders back and looked him in the eye.

"I admired you once, Bey," she said. "I thought you were the best of us."

"I am the best of you," he sneered. "Goodbye, Klin-Fa."

Uldir clutched for his blaster, but it wasn't near his hand.

The blade whipped out, and Uldir choked back a scream of frustration, but the red blade went up in a parry, not an attack, and several blaster bolts went searing off at odd angles.

Vega.

Taking advantage of the distraction, Klin-Fa spun to kick Bey. She connected, and he staggered, turned, and clubbed her in the temple with the butt of his saber. She dropped. Uldir grunted, stood, looking for the blaster, but it was nowhere to be seen.

But a few meters away, smoke was rising.

Klin-Fa's lightsaber. He ran toward it.

He picked it up and turned in time to see Vega go down in a rain of stones and branches propelled by the Force. The bushes were on fire, and he got a lungful of smoke that dizzied him, but he saw that Bey was once more lifting his weapon over the fallen Klin-Fa.

He would never make it in time. He did the only thing he could—he threw the lightsaber.

He watched as it flipped end-over-end toward Bey. Bey held up his

I'll settle for helping the Yuuzhan Vong

hand, and it made a sudden drastic course change, veering high and to the right. Bey started his swing.

"No!" Uldir shouted.

The lightsaber hit a tree by the pommel, bounced weirdly, and sheered through Bey from shoulder to hip. He turned to stare at Uldir in utter disbelief for an instant before his body slid apart.

Uldir stood there for twenty seconds, trying to absorb what had just happened. Then he ran to see how badly Klin-Fa and Vega were hurt.

Overhead he heard thunder, and looked up. It was a Yuuzhan Vong war vessel, descending like a meteor.

Leafa would have howled with satisfaction if he hadn't been howling in pain. Tsaa Qalu braced to meet his attack, almost casually, knowing what the outcome would be. But Leafa knew that too. Everyone thought Dugs were stupid, headstrong, emotional—that they couldn't learn.

But he'd learned pretty fast. His leap carried him not toward the Yuuzhan Vong hunter, but to the pilot, and with a single brutal yank he ripped the cognition hood free of its tether and then just ran, back through the door he had come in by. Tsaa Qalu was right behind him, of course, and gaining, when the ship suddenly flipped upside down. The Yuuzhan Vong, with his grotesquely high center

of gravity and silly upper limbs landed badly. Leaf, even with a limb broken, still managed to land better. Of course it hurt, and he nearly blacked out again, but he was up before Qalu, and as the ship continued bucking and jerking about, Leaf's low-built scramble gained him even more ground.

Enough to get into one of the coralskippers, seal it with an order through the cognition hood, and watch Tsaa Qalu pound on the hull in terrific and entertaining frustration.

Which he should not have done. If Tsaa Qalu had spent that time getting into the other coralskipper, he doubtless would have been better able to seize control of a system which—after all—was built for his chemistry and physiology, not a Dug's.

But before Qalu could think of that, Leaf's borrowed coralskipper shot from the docking nacelle with a jolt. This time he'd launched the 'skip on purpose.

The Dug wasted little time taking control of the *Throat Slasher* while steering his craft away from the larger ship. A mental image of the fast-approaching landscape from the *Throat Slasher's* point of view coalesced in his mind's eye, and the Dug allowed himself a victorious smirk. He watched from his vantage point a few hundred meters away as Qalu's ship left a nice red smear on the side of a mountain.

"It's good to hear your voice, Master Skywalker," Uldir said. "Congratulations on the birth of your son."

isn't it? When you let go. When you released your desires and found your true path."

"I guess. Master Ikrit did say something like that, right before I left the academy."

"He was wise," Skywalker said. "Take that crew of yours and have rest, will you? There are still a few free worlds where you can relax."

"I'll do that," Uldir replied.

"May the Force be with you, Uldir."

"And with you, Master."

He keyed off the hyperwave transmitter and went back to the common room, where the others waited.

He grinned when he saw Leaf with a big air splint on his arm.

The Dug's eyes narrowed. "You aren't going to kiss me again, are you?"

"I ought to. Not only are you still alive, but you saved us all."

"I'll vomit this time," Leaf warned. "Do I need to tell you what I just ate?"

"No." He turned to Vega. "Set us a course for someplace relaxing. Master Skywalker's orders."

"Right, boss-boy."

Vook cleared his throat. "The abandoned Hxll launch platform in the Sluis Van system would be nice. It has the most beautiful pre-Republic accelerator towers—"

"An airless piece of space junk?" Leaf snarled. "What kind of a vaca-

in Vong burn this all down, and then maybe I'll kill them too.

"Thank you, Uldir," Master Skywalker replied. "How are things there?"

"The Vratix can move really fast when they need to. They torched the field and aerosoled the surrounding area with fliers. They're still doing it, even though worst-case scenario had the virus spreading only half a kilometer during that time. They got a sample of the plague so they can test for it, and it looks like the danger was contained."

"Good. That was good work, Uldir. I'm proud of you and your team. You really went above and beyond the call of duty. And the Force was with you."

"Master, about the Force. I know my training was sort of a bust—"

"The Force is with you, Uldir," Skywalker said. "You just have a peculiar relationship with it. I missed that, back when you were at the academy, though I think Master Ikrit understood. Recent . . . debates within the Jedi, and the things you've told me lately have forced me to reevaluate."

"I don't understand."

"You don't command the Force, no. You don't use it as a tool. You aren't built that way, somehow. But you are a part of the living Force in a way which few Jedi ever manage to be."

"I don't think there's anything so special about me," Uldir said.

"You thought so when I first met you," Skywalker said. "You thought the universe of yourself, and mostly about yourself. But you changed." He smiled. "And that's when your luck started,

tion is that? I say we hit the casinos in Cloud City. That's a good time."

"Boss-boy?" Vega asked.

"You settle it, Vega," he said. "You're temporarily in charge."

"Boss—"

"Sorry Vega. I need a rest, too."

He found Klin-Fa sitting in the gun turret, staring out into space. Her bandaged hand rested on her knee.

"It wasn't your fault," he said.

"It was, it wasn't," she said. "I know I have to let it go. But they were my friends. Both of them. And now—"

"I know." He put his hand on her arm. To his surprise, she took it.

"What I was trying to tell you before," she said. "Before I knew Bey had turned dark."

"I know you had feelings for him," Uldir said.

"Yes. Friendly ones. But I knew my feelings for Yabaley had hurt him. I didn't know how badly, but I knew it. I didn't want to hurt him again so soon."

"What do you mean?"

She stood and stared into his eyes. "Are you really that big a fool, Uldir Locket?"

"Well . . ."

"Hush." She covered his mouth with her hand, and then with her lips. They stayed that way for a long time. ☹

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VOLUME 64



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FAN CLUB EXCLUSIVE! STAR WARS: ATTACK OF THE CLONES BASEBALL CAP & T-SHIRT

Designed specifically for the Official Star Wars Fan Club, this black baseball cap and charcoal gray T-shirt feature the Attack of the Clones logo on the front, and the Fan Club logo on the back! The cap is adjustable to fit most sizes and the T-shirt features all new art across the front and is available in L and XL. Both items are made from 100% cotton. Get yours today!

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KEYWORD: JT5042

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KEYWORD: JT7770

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Made exclusively for the Official *Star Wars* Fan Club, the Limited Edition *Star Wars* Bobblehead Set: Series 1 is sure to win your heart and imagination! The custom-molded, hand-painted, polystyrene bobbleheads spring to life with all the detail of the original characters. Set One includes all three bobbleheads featured in the inaugural release: Darth Vader, Boba Fett, and C-3PO with R2-D2. Each bobblehead is individually numbered, comes with a certificate of authenticity, and is sure to become one of the most cherished pieces of your *Star Wars* collection.



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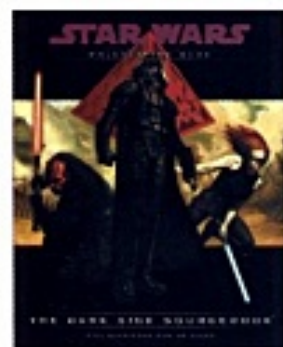
KEYWORD: JT7812
\$39.95 **\$37.95**



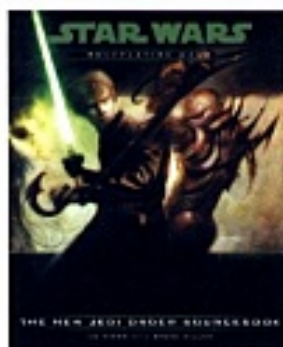
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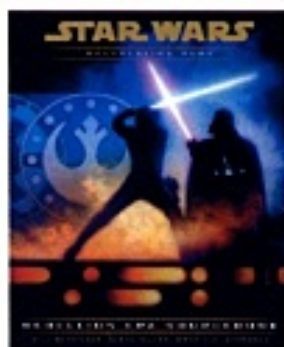
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KEYWORD: JT6451
\$29.95 **\$27.95**



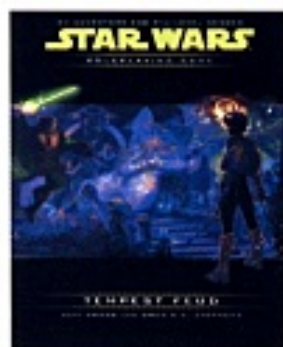
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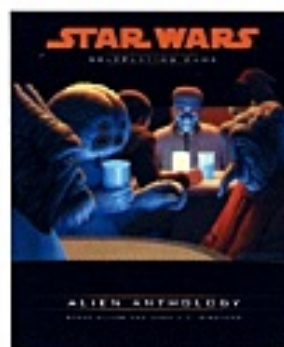
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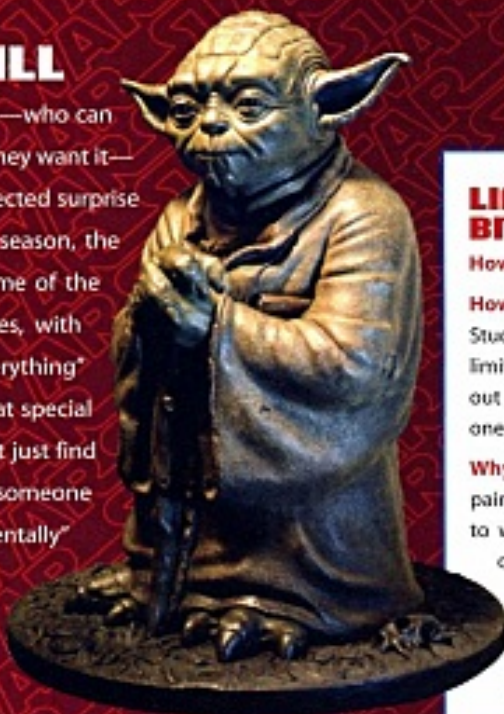
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THE PERFECT GIFTS FOR Every *Star Wars* Fan on your List

TOKEN OF GOODWILL

Everybody loves gifts. Even Hutt crime lords—who can have nearly anything they want, whenever they want it—get misty-eyed at the prospect of an unexpected surprise or a truly thoughtful present. This holiday season, the staff of *Star Wars Insider* compiled a list some of the best *Star Wars* products for fans of all ages, with prices ranging to “for the Hutt who has everything” to “stocking stuffer.” If you’re looking for that special present for a fellow *Star Wars* fan, you might just find it in the following pages. If you’re worried someone might not know what to get you, try “accidentally” leaving your magazine open to this page for a few days. It’s no Jedi mind trick, but it’s been known to work.



LIFE-SIZE YODA BRONZE STATUE

How much? \$15,000.00

How do I get one? Artist Larry Noble of Noble Studios will be casting only 30 copies of this limited edition bronze Yoda statue. To find out more information, including how to get one, send an email to bronzeyoda@aol.com.

Why it's cool: If this life-size statue were painted instead of bronze, you'd expect Yoda to walk and talk. Originally a labor of love, only the 30 limited-edition castings will ever be made. Of those, only 25 are still available as of this writing. Just looking at this statue stirs up thoughts of a second mortgage.

BY MICHAEL MIKAELIAN

Today

GIFT GUIDE

JABBA THE HUTT & PRINCESS LEIA STATUES

How much? Varies by availability

How do I get one? Attakus (www.attakus.fr), a French manufacturer, has gained permission to export their *Star Wars* statues to the United States in limited quantities. Your best bet for acquiring one or both of these statues will likely be an online retailer or auctioneer.

Why it's cool: Attakus has made over a dozen really cool *Star Wars* statues from Episodes I and IV–VI, but they're available in very limited quantities outside of France. Jabba and Leia each stand alone as great statues, but they can also be displayed together. Jabba even comes with a replica of the chain that Leia eventually uses to strangle the decadent old slug.

Since they're not easy to find outside of France, the prices for these statues vary widely. Jabba ranges from about \$650 to \$900, and Leia from \$220 to \$270.

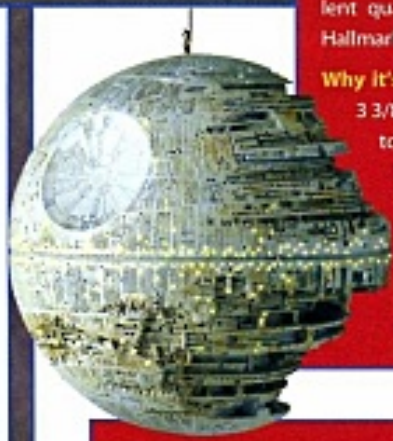


DEATH STAR KEEPSAKE ORNAMENT

How much? \$24.00

How do I get one? Hallmark is a name synonymous with the holidays. For years, they've been making Star Wars ornaments of excellent quality. If this Death Star ornament sells out at your local Hallmark store, try ordering one from www.hallmark.com.

Why it's cool: Hallmark artists have outdone themselves with this 3 3/8" replica of the Emperor's ultimate space station. In addition to the intricate sculpting and attention to details, the Death Star ornament contains flashing lights and a sound chip that features actual dialog from *Return of the Jedi*. Nothing sums up the holidays like a gloating Emperor: "As you can see, my young apprentice, your friends have failed. Now witness the firepower of this fully armed and operational battle station! Fire at will, Commander!"



INDUSTRIAL AUTOMATON R2-D2

How much? \$99.99

How do I get one? Hasbro may not have been the original Star Wars toy manufacturer, but their name has become synonymous with Star Wars toys and games. You can find R2-D2 at toy stores, or one of several online retailers listed at www.hasbro.com.

Why it's cool: For more than 25 years, one of everyone's favorite characters has been R2-D2, the lovesable, feisty, and heroic droid. R2-D2 is a 15-inch-plus version of the droid that puts the "star" in Star Wars. He comes when you call him and obeys your commands. Thanks to an innovative speech recognition system, he recognizes 40 spoken phrases. R2-D2 uses infrared scanning and sonar technology to patrol your room or follow you wherever you go. He also plays games, sings tunes, and even has a retractable arm that lets him hold a 12-ounce drink can!



STAR WARS T-SHIRTS

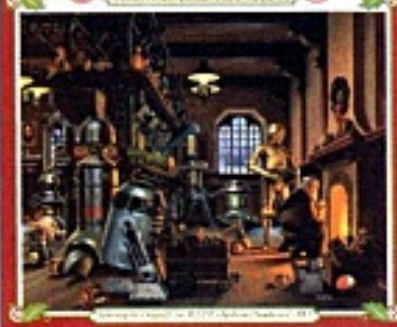
How much? \$16.99 (S-XL)

How do I get one? In an attempt to address the need for a line dedicated to the trend-wise consumer, Lucas Licensing, in conjunction with Giant Merchandising, developed a collection of urban caricature illustrations of their beloved classic characters. This past May, the first series featured such fan favorites as Princess Leia, Boba Fett, and Chewbacca. The latest offerings in this collection will be available only at Hot Topic retail stores and online at www.hottopic.com.

Why it's cool: The five new designs in the urban caricature line are Darth Vader, R2-D2 and C-3PO, AT-AT Driver, AT-AT Blueprint, and Han Solo in Stormtrooper Disguise. These Star Wars Ts are so funky, die-hard Star Wars fanatics aren't the only ones who will appreciate them. They'll make a welcomed addition to the wardrobe of cartoon art connoisseurs and club-hoppers alike.



Christmas In The Stars



CHRISTMAS IN THE STARS

Back in 1980, Casablanca Records released a Star Wars Christmas album appropriately titled *Christmas in the Stars*. Ben Burtt provided the bleeps and bleats of R2-D2, and actor Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) contributed his voice for nine yuletide tracks. In lieu of standard holiday tunes, *Christmas in the Stars* is a musical narrative following Artoo's education in the meaning of Christmas. It includes notable song titles such as "What Can You Get a Wookiee for Christmas (When He Already Owns a Comb?)" and "R2-D2 We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Threepio even recounts the holiday classic "Twas the Night before Christmas."

In 1996, Rhino Records re-released *Christmas in the Stars* on CD, complete with new liner notes by Lucasfilm's Steve Sansweet. Although this rare Star Wars record is no longer in print, you can probably still find a second-hand copy for your holiday listening pleasure in used music bins or online.

INSIDER'S HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



STORMTROOPER RETROCKET GUITAR

How much? \$1,299.98

How do I get one? Fernandes Guitars are available many places guitars are sold, but their Star Wars Retrorocket guitars (the other one features Darth Vader) are limited to only 250 each for North America, so your average music store might not have them in stock. Check out www.fernandesguitars.com for a list of retailers.

Why it's cool: Guitars, especially the famously contoured Retrorocket, are one of the coolest things on the planet. Who hasn't wanted to be a rock star? Reward your guitar-wailing loved ones with an instrument any Star Wars collector would be proud to own. If the price tag on this one's too steep, you can always start out with Fernandes' custom Star Wars knobs, guitar straps, or even collectible picks.

STAR WARS: EPISODE II ATTACK OF THE CLONES

How much? \$29.98 (DVD), \$24.98 (VHS)

How do I get one? Twentieth Century Fox has been distributing Star Wars movies for Lucasfilm Ltd. for 25 years in theaters and on home video. The latest episode in the Star Wars saga is available on DVD and VHS (both full-screen and widescreen editions) anywhere DVDs and videos are sold.

Why it's cool: If you already own Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace on DVD or VHS, then you can expect the same high quality from this sequel. Of course, the action is more intense, thanks in part to the phenomenal advancements in computer animation by ILM. Besides the feature film, both the DVD and VHS editions have behind-the-scenes extras no Star Wars fan would want to miss.



FORCE FX ANAKIN SKYWALKER LIGHTSABER

How much? \$129.00

How do I get one? This amazingly realistic lightsaber, complete with glowing "blade," is made by Master Replicas, who specialize in realistic movie prop replicas. You can order it directly from www.masterreplicas.com.

Why it's cool: "Snap-hiss. Crack! Whoosh." Just three of the sounds you won't have to make yourself if you get one of these nifty lightsabers. Not only does the "blade" light up, but it also makes distinct lightsaber noises when you turn it on, off, or tap the impact-resistant electro-luminescent blade.



DELUXE JANGO FETT COSTUME

How much? \$75.00 (blasters and holster \$23.00, sold separately)

How do I get one? Rubie's Costume Company (www.rubies.com) makes a complete line of Star Wars costumes, masks, and accessories. Since Halloween has already passed, you might have trouble finding this one in a store, but if you look hard enough you should be able to find it online.

Why it's cool: Short of making it yourself, this deluxe costume kit is the most detailed and realistic bounty hunter getup you'll find anywhere. The jumpsuit has molded rubber armor plating, belt, and gauntlets, giving it an appearance similar to the costume worn by actor Temuera Morrison in *Attack of the Clones*. It comes in five sizes: adult small, medium, and large; and child standard and extra-large. Completists may want to drop an extra \$30 and pick up the slightly more realistic Jango Fett helmet sold separately.



ULTIMATE COLLECTORS' SERIES IMPERIAL STAR DESTROYER

How much? \$269.99

How do I get one? The LEGO company, known world-wide for its intricately detailed playsets made using an interlocking brick design, created the Imperial Star Destroyer to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Star Wars. You can buy this set only online at shop.lego.com at this time.

Why it's cool: Except for model kits and toy replicas a few inches in length, no one's ever offered a Star Destroyer of this size. Of course, you have to put all **3,104 pieces** together before you can cruise the star lanes and crush the Rebellion. It even comes complete with a miniature model of Princess Leia's Rebel Blockade Runner, the *Tantive IV*.



STAR WARS BOUNTY HUNTER

How much? \$49.95

How do I get one? LucasArts Entertainment Co., a subsidiary of Lucasfilm, has been making Star Wars, Indiana Jones, and many other creative and exciting games for 20 years. Whether you own a Nintendo GameCube or Sony PlayStation 2, you'll be able to find Star Wars Bounty Hunter wherever those game systems' titles are sold or online at www.lucasarts.com.

Why it's cool: This action game bears a strong resemblance to games past: third-person perspective, jumping and climbing action, and a wide array of cool weapons. What sets it apart is the "hero" you play: Jango Fett. Although he is indisputably a bad guy in *Attack of the Clones*, papa Fett is unleashed on a host of even badder guys in this console game. Collect bounties to unlock secret extras and fight your way to a surprising villain, Jango style.



BOUNTY HUNTER WATCH

How much? \$110.00

How do I get one? Fossil has been making Star Wars watches for years. You can find their latest offerings at selected jewelry and department stores, or you can order directly from the company's website, www.fossil.com.

Why it's cool: Not only is this stainless-steel silver watch totally cool all by itself, it's got an image of Boba Fett etched on its face. It also comes with a dog tag and chain, and a molded polycarbonate case, all bearing the distinctive horned skull emblem featured on Fett's armor.



MILLENNIUM FALCON ADVENTURE

How much? \$27.99

How do I get one? Hasbro has combined two of their most popular lines—Star Wars and Playskool—and come up with a Star Wars toy everyone can appreciate. The Millennium Falcon Adventure playset is oddly absent from many toy store shelves, but can easily be found at K-B Toy stores and at www.kbtoys.com.

Why it's cool: The style of the Playskool Star Wars figures and vehicles alone make this one of the coolest Star Wars toys we've ever seen for such a low price. Add in the neat authentic movie sounds (four buttons that play multiple sounds), opening panels and hatches, and four—count 'em, four—awesome action figures, and you just can't help but fall in love with this adorable playset.



INSIDER'S HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



Attack of the Clones Novel

How much? \$14.99

How do I get one? Del Rey began publishing Star Wars fiction with Vector Prime, by R.A. Salvatore, the book that launched The New Jedi Order series. Ballantine/Del Rey offers this special hardcover edition of R.A. Salvatore's adaptation of *Attack of the Clones* in bookstores or online at www.randomhouse.com.

Why it's cool: R.A. Salvatore began writing the novelization of *Attack of the Clones* almost a full year before the release of the movie, and it is based on the original shooting script. Digital photography allowed George Lucas to make changes—including whole new scenes—much later in production than traditional filming allows. While this advantage meant the *Attack of the Clones* was more mutable nearly up until its release, it had the side effect of allowing Lucas to leave some scripted and shot scenes on the cutting room floor. Many of these scenes can still be found in this novelization, which also includes a new cover image.

Darth Vader Minibust

How much? \$50.00

How do I get one? Dark Horse Comics and Gentle Giant Studios have teamed up to create a series of miniature busts of some of the most famous Star Wars characters. Although you might find Star Wars Minibusts at a comic or collectible store in time for the holidays, your best bet might be to order directly from www.darkhorse.com.

Why it's cool: Using a three-dimensional laser scanning device, Gentle Giant studios can create a rough model of any object, including actor's heads, bodies, and inanimate objects. This model is as accurate as an old-fashioned plaster cast, with none of the mess and requiring a fraction of the time. Of course, the scan is only the first step in a long, traditional sculpting process. This season, Gentle Giant has turned its technological terror on the villain of the classic trilogy—and gave him arms, too.



Jango Fett: Open Seasons Trade Paperback

How much? \$12.95

How do I get one? Since their first Star Wars Release with Dark Empire, Dark Horse Comics has been delivering Star Wars comics that are just as integral to the Expanded Universe as the fiction lines from Del Rey and Scholastic. This collected reprinting of the four-issue mini-series of the same name is available in book and comic stores now, as well as online at www.darkhorse.com.

Why it's cool: This mini-series ties together many of the loose ends that have plagued the Fett family tree since the first scrap of Expanded Universe background was created for Boba Fett in the Marvel Comics Star Wars series. Over several iterations, more details were added like so many scraps of mismatched Mandalorian armor, some contradicting others. Boba's origin as a clone of Jango shook up 99% of his Expanded Universe origins. *Open Seasons* successfully dovetails all of these disparaging storylines and begins to resolve them into one cohesive history.



SOMETHING EXTRA

You won't need to use any Jedi mind tricks to get your holiday shopping done this year. Thanks to MBNA America Bank, your Star Wars credit will always be good—as long as you don't overextend yourself, of course.

MBNA is offering its customers a chance to get one of two truly powerful Star Wars credit cards. Whether you prefer Jedi Master Yoda or Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, there's a card for you. Earn points with each purchase that can be redeemed for exclusive



Star Wars merchandise, gift certificates, and entertainment rewards. For more information about Star Wars credit cards, go to www.mbna.com.

If you find yourself facing down a feisty Toydarian shop owner looking for something more real than credit, how about a check? The Anthony Grandio Company has just the thing for you: the limited edition 25th Anniversary Edition Star Wars Armada checks.

The Star Wars Armada check series features 24 images of the most memorable starships from all five movies. Each order gives you 8 different random starships, with at least one image from each of the five films. You can also buy one of three checkbook covers: a limited edition Star Wars 25th Anniversary vinyl cover, or your choice of a Galactic Empire or Rebel Alliance full-grain leather wallet. For more information about Star Wars checks, go to www.anthonygrandio.com.



MYTHMAKING: BEHIND THE SCENES OF ATTACK OF THE CLONES

How much? \$19.95 (soft cover), \$39.95 (hardcover)

How do I get one? Del Rey has also been publishing Star Wars non-fiction books for years, including the popular *Essential Guide* series. Author Jody Duncan's first-hand account of the making of Episode II appears in bookstores or online at www.randomhouse.com.

Why it's cool: *Mythmaking* is both a visually stunning and thoroughly in-depth account of the making of Episode II. For some portions of the movie's production, author Jody Duncan had a front-row seat right next to Director George Lucas for the on-set shooting. Duncan's day job—Editor of *Cinefex* magazine, which reports on movie visual effects in intricate detail—made her the perfect choice to write about the visual effects process for *Attack of the Clones*.

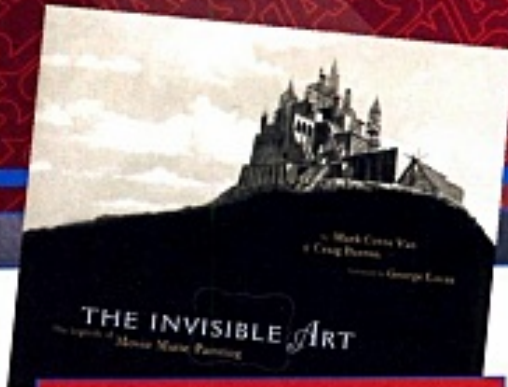


SKYWALKER RANCH FIRE BRIGADE ENGINE CO. 1589

How much? \$209.96

How do I get one? Code 3 Collectibles specializes in historical and contemporary fire and rescue scale models and other replicas, as well as air and space items in conjunction with the Smithsonian. You might be able to find a specialty dealer who has one on hand, but your best bet is to order directly from www.code3.net.

Why it's cool: The Skywalker Ranch Fire Brigade Engine Co. 1589 1/32nd-scale model is a historic first for Skywalker Ranch and Code 3 Collectibles. Most importantly, it's the first time a Skywalker Ranch item has been made available for sale anywhere other than at the Ranch itself. It also comes with a replica department patch (a first for Code 3) and has over 500 pieces in its construction, making it the most intricate of Code 3's replicas. Whether you're a fire-and-rescue enthusiast or Star Wars collector, you won't believe the level of detail on this model.



THE INVISIBLE ART

How much? \$75.00

How do I get one? Chronicle Books publishes art books and miniature storybooks based on the Star Wars universe. *The Invisible Art*, a behind-the-scenes book, can be found at bookstores or online at www.chroniclebooks.com.

Why it's cool: Mark Cotta Vaz and Craig Barron delve into the history of matte paintings, one of Hollywood's oldest tricks. Filmmakers have been using matte paintings—a miniature landscape painting which, when filmed, gives the illusion of a real landscape—for nearly a century. Industrial Light & Magic revolutionized the use of matte paintings throughout the Star Wars saga and countless other productions. This book features many paintings used in the original trilogy's production, and it includes a foreword by George Lucas.



HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Many companies take the opportunity this time of year to wish all of their business partners a happy holiday season in the form of a greeting card. Lucasfilm is no exception. Ever since the 1970s, Lucasfilm has been wishing its partners a happy holiday in a decidedly Star Wars manner. C-3PO and R2-D2 graced the cover of one of the first Lucasfilm holiday cards, much to the delight of its recipients. In the years since, it has become a fun project in and of itself to come up with another witty holiday-themed image.



INSIDER'S HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

CHARACTERS, CREATURES, AND DROIDS 2003 DAILY CALENDAR

How much? \$12.99

How do I get one? Cedco Publishing offers a variety of *Star Wars* calendars for 2003, both wall and desk variety. Look for them in gift shops, bookstores, or online at www.cedco.com.

Why it's cool: The *Star Wars* Characters, Creatures, and Droids 2003 Daily Calendar is 365 encyclopedic tear-off pages of collected lore. With a full-color image from the *Star Wars* movies on every page, flipping through this daily calendar is like watching the movies very, very slowly. That is, it would be, except the entries are alphabetical—so don't expect a mutoscope effect. (For the definition of "mutoscope," we recommend an accompanying word-a-day calendar.)



STAR WARS TRADING CARD GAME A NEW HOPE EXPANSION PACKS

How much? \$9.99 (game packs), \$1.49 (5-card boosters), \$3.29 (11-card boosters)

How do I get one? Wizards of the Coast, a division of Hasbro, pioneered trading card games ten years ago. In 2002, they released their first *Star Wars* TCG expansion based on Episode III. You can find *A New Hope*, the latest set based on Episode IV, at your local toy, hobby, electronic game, or book store.

Why it's cool: The *Star Wars* Trading Card Game allows you to recreate climactic battles using *Star Wars* forces of your own choosing. The *A New Hope* expansion set, the third set for the game, introduces characters and ships from the movie that started it all. All you need to get started is a Light Side Game Pack and a Dark Side Game Pack. Once you've got the basics down, add in a few *A New Hope* booster packs for more choices and to develop your own strategies.



TALKING R2-D2 STANDUP

How much? \$31.95

How do I get one? Advanced Graphics is responsible for both life-size *Star Wars* stand-ups and intricately detailed 3-D paper sculptures. Their products are available at a variety of specialty stores but can easily be purchased from their website at www.advancedgraphics.com.

Why it's cool: Technically, this life-size stand-up doesn't talk. It does, however, bleat, bloop, and make other noises unique to this feisty astromech droid. R2-D2 is motion-activated, allowing you to leave it on to greet you when you come home or surprise unsuspecting guests.

STAR WARS PROMEDIA 2.1 SPEAKERS

How much? \$249.99

How do I get one? Klipsch was one of the first U.S. companies to manufacture loudspeakers and is the only one that makes cinema, home theater, audio, and computer sound systems that conform to THX sound standards. You can test-drive Klipsch speakers at your local home electronics store, but you'll probably find the special edition *Star Wars* speakers only at www.klipsch.com.

Why it's cool: Whether you're playing a *Star Wars* computer game or watching a *Star Wars* movie at home, these powerful little speakers conform to THX's quality assurance standards. That means you can be sure the sound you're hearing is the sound you were intended to hear. Besides the cool *Star Wars* color scheme and official logo, these babies also come with a certificate of authenticity and a free copy of the computer game *Star Wars Starfighter* for the PC. Klipsch is only making 1,000 of these limited edition sets, so don't wait too long.

STAR WARS INSIDER

STAR WARS INSIDER SUBSCRIPTION & FAN CLUB MEMBERSHIP

How much? \$28.95

How do I get one? Palzo Publishing, LLC recently acquired the rights to publish *Star Wars Insider* magazine and manage the official *Star Wars* Fan Club. To subscribe, just fill out one of the subscription cards in this very copy, or go to www.palzipublishing.com. You can even get gift subscriptions for friends and family.

Why it's cool: *Star Wars Insider* magazine is the official magazine of the *Star Wars* Fan Club. Every issue contains exclusive features such as the "Prequel Update," in which Producer Rick McCallum talks about behind-the-scenes details of Episode III, cast and crew interviews, and other articles sure to wow any *Star Wars* fan. A one-year subscription automatically makes you a Fan Club member and includes a membership kit that contains collectible items you won't find anywhere else. Four times a year, members receive *Bantha Tracks*, the Fan Club newsletter, with their copy of *Insider*. If you subscribe now, you'll also get a special LEGO TIE fighter mini-model with your order (while supplies last).

Happy holidays from *Star Wars Insider*! 🍷

STAR WARS JEDI



BY DANIEL WALLACE

HEROES OF THE REPUBLIC GET A SERIES OF THEIR OWN

In the context of *Star Wars* as popular myth, the Jedi are the Arthurian knights. If that comparison seems forced, ask yourself, what exactly do they do, the Knights of the Round Table? No, Monty Python fans, they don't impersonate Clark Gable. They carry out quests against the forces of darkness, invoke supernatural assistance, wield magic swords—and their decline marked the end of a golden age. Sound familiar?

If the Jedi are the noblest of *Star Wars* heroes, the Clone Wars captures them at their most tragic. The new comics series *Star Wars: Jedi* aims to showcase individual knights at war, and though the Jedi don't know it, this is their last great hurrah. In time, especially when Episode III hits cineplexes in 2005, the tribulations of the Clone Wars will usher in the fall of Camelot—er, the Republic.

Writer John Ostrander and artist Jan Duursema, both Force fanatics, are the creative engines behind *Star Wars: Jedi*. Scheduled for launch in February, the series will appear on a semi-regular basis and tie in with important Clone Wars events occurring in the ongoing title, *Star Wars: Republic*. Dark Horse Comics' Randy Stradley explains that a single book just wasn't big enough to cover a conflict of this scale. "Each 48-page issue of *Jedi* will focus on famous Jedi and how their lives are affected by the Clone Wars," he says. "The first issue starts right at the top with Mace Windu. When a number of Jedi decide either to side with the Separatists or remain neutral in the conflict, Mace can't afford to have their ranks depleted by defections. Can the galaxy survive a Jedi civil war?"

Fans will have to wait until February to learn the answer to that question, but the desire to tell Jedi-centric stories has long haunted Ostrander and Duursema. The genesis of the

new comic occurred when the two, along with Stradley and others, met to plan future Clone Wars storylines for *Star Wars: Republic*. As Duursema explains, "I mentioned to Randy that my favorite characters in Episodes I and II were the Jedi and, half-joking, said that my *Star Wars* dream project would be called 'Jedi.' I never in my wildest dreams thought it would become a real project!"

As can be gleaned from their names, *Republic* will provide the Republic's point of view on the Clone Wars (as seen through the eyes of familiar heroes such as General Obi-Wan Kenobi), while *Jedi* will focus on the battlefield struggles of the Jedi Council. "Heck of a sandbox to play in," observes John Ostrander, when asked about the myriad stories still to be told in a war that will span years, in both real time and in *Star Wars* time. "This conflict is something that has been much discussed and not seen since *Star Wars* began! Who wouldn't want to?" Jan Duursema says that the philosophical question of empathy vs. aggression was never far from her and John's minds. "We asked ourselves some hard questions about how this war would affect the Jedi. Until now, the Jedi have been keepers of the peace who seek to preserve life. Now they have been summoned up as generals who must give the orders to send others into battle."

In fact, questions like these are what fascinate Duursema and make *Jedi* her ideal project. "The Jedi are the Samurai of the *Star Wars* universe!" she enthuses. "I've never gotten over the thrill of seeing and hearing a lightsaber igniting. There is no doubt that staging the lightsaber battles is always a high point of these books for me. But the Jedi as highly skilled, enlightened warriors is very appealing to me as well. The Jedi represent the best of ourselves. They are always seeking to remain in harmony with the universe and at peace within themselves. They can tap into the higher power of the Force and deal with the doubts and fears we all have bravely."

The lineup of *Jedi* will change every issue, as Ostrander and Duursema throw the spotlight on a different member of the order.

A HOT NIGHT ON HOTH

Taking a temporary furlough from the Clone Wars, Dark Horse returns to the classic era with a new Han and Leia one-shot. Written by Judd Winick, this comedic tale strikes romantic sparks through the pairing of Han and Leia aboard a crashed ship, as a Hoth blizzard howls outside and the pair await overnight rescue from their Echo Base comrades. Judd Winick is an award-winning writer and cartoonist who first earned national attention as a cast member in the third season of MTV's *The Real World*. The death of fellow cast member Pedro Zamora from A.I.D.S. in 1994 inspired Winick's graphic novel *Pedro and Me*, which was nominated for an Eisner award and named a Best Book of 2000 by *Publisher's Weekly*. Other projects from Winick include a writing stint on DC's *Green Lantern* and his original *The Adventures of Barry Ween, Boy Genius*, though this is his first foray into the *Star Wars* universe. Look for it on comics racks in February.

Illustrations by Jan Duursema and Joe Wayne



Issue 2 will appear in April and focus on Togrutu warrior Shaak Ti from *Attack of the Clones*, while issue 3 (July) will tell a story involving Twi'lek Jedi Aayla Secura. The latter character holds a special place in the hearts of Ostrander and Duursema—they created her for the comics (in *Star Wars* ongoing's "Twilight" story arc) in 2000, then saw her become a live-action character when George Lucas included her in *Attack of the Clones*. The character remains one of very few Expanded Universe creations to make the jump to the big screen.

The Aayla Secura issue will also see the return of Episode I's chalk-skinned bounty hunter Aurra Sing. Don't expect these two powerful women to see eye-to-eye. "Seeing Amy Allen and [Aurra Sing actress] Michonne Bourriague together at a comic book convention was the inspiration behind the Aayla issue," explains Duursema. "Aayla Secura vs. Aurra Sing—it was a natural! I found out later that fans were asking Amy and Michonne if Aayla and Aurra would ever battle! The answer is 'yes!'" John Ostrander says that *Star Wars: Jedi* will introduce all-new Jedi characters as well as revisit familiar faces from *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack of the Clones*, though he jokes that with Jedi like Aayla, "that distinction can always get blurred." Duursema reveals that the partial lineup under discussion for future issues includes Luminara Unduli, Barriss Offee, Kit Fisto, and Quinlan Vos. She also speculates that readers might encounter Yoda, Ki-Adi-Mundi, and other prominent members of the Jedi Council, "as well as other comic book Jedi such as Zao, Tsui Choi, Tholme, K'Kruuk, T'ra Saa, and maybe the Dark Woman."

In Episode I, Anakin Skywalker confidently told Qui-Gon Jinn "no one can kill a Jedi Knight," to which the Jedi Master

responded with a world-weary "I wish that were so." As evidenced by the Battle of Geonosis, Qui-Gon had it right. Not even Jedi Masters can stand up to the combined blaster fire of a thousand battle droids. As *Star Wars: Jedi* enters the thick of the Clone Wars, the galaxy's paladin-protectors are in for the fight of their lives. *Raves Ostrander, "The Clone Wars! Jedi! Jan on the art! This is going to be great!"* 🙌



BOBA FETT'S GREATEST HITS

BY JASON FRY

A BOUNTY OF TALES ABOUT A HUNTER'S LONG CAREER

The story of what happened to young Boba Fett after he saw his father Jango die on Geonosis began to unfold in April, in Scholastic's *Boba Fett: The Fight to Survive*, written by Terry Bisson. That first book of the Boba Fett chronicles recounted the events of *Attack of the Clones* through Boba's eyes and took his story further, sending him back to Kamino and then to the moons of Bogden in search of Jango's employer, Darth Tyrannus/Count Dooku.

The latest book in the series begins with Boba chafing under the Count's rules on the devastated world of Raxus Prime. In *Boba Fett: Crossfire*, Boba finds himself first in the middle of a battle between Dooku's legions and the

Jedi-led clone troopers (who are his brothers, in a matter of speaking), and then in the hands of the Republic. He meets up once again with bounty hunter Aurra Sing, and he finds himself experiencing a rare thing in his lonely life: friendship.

While the *Attack of the Clones* novel and the Scholastic books have filled in some of the blanks about Fett's past (and clarified some things we thought we knew), the grown-up Boba Fett wasn't exactly a stranger to the saga's "Expanded Universe."

In *Return of the Jedi*, Fett vanished down the gullet of the Sarlacc to be slowly digested over a thousand years. His undignified exit—struck on his rocket pack by a blind Han Solo—was untimely for such a fan favorite. So Fett was soon resurrected to chase Han Solo again,

(Fans of the old Marvel comics will remember reading about Fett escaping the Sarlacc pit way back in 1983.)

BREAKING THE BOOK BARRIER

Fett stepped back into the spotlight in 1996, with appearances in a pair of short-story collections—*Tales of the Bounty Hunters* and *Tales From Jabba's Palace*. Daniel Keys Moran's "The Last One Standing," from the former book, begins on Concord Dawn, then shows Fett watching a teenaged Han Solo fight for his life in an arena on the planet Jubilar. It's a fine story that follows Fett throughout his long career, ending on an almost-mythic note as a much older Han and



Fett, on Jubilar once more, stare down their blasters at each other.

There's a fascinating encounter between Fett and Princess Leia, as Jabba's thugs throw the captured Rebel leader into Fett's quarters as a trophy. The bounty hunter and Princess argue furiously over the Rebellion and the morality of Han's having smuggled spice. Moran also shows Fett in his later years, revealing that Fett's time in the Sarlacc's gut cost him part of his right leg and left him stricken with disease.

A year later, A.C. Crispin told the tale of Han Solo's early years in a trilogy for Bantam, and gave Fett a supporting role. What is he doing? Hunting Han, of course. In 1997's *The Hutt Gambit*, he's hired by the t'landa Til Teroenza to capture the Corellian. Fett nearly does so, ambushing Han on Nar Shaddaa, but Lando Calrissian turns the tables on the bounty hunter. Later, the bounty is lifted when Jabba the Hutt tops Teroenza's price and pays Fett to leave the Corellian alone.

In 1998's *Rebel Dawn*, Fett stalks Han's first love, the Rebel Bria Tharen. He captures Bria and Lando aboard the *Queen of Empire* but





loses them when pirates led by an old girl-friend of Lando's attack the luxury liner. At the book's end, Fett appears again and saves Han's life: Teroenza is about to blast Han but is gunned down by Fett, who has been hired by a Hutt boss to eliminate the t'linda Til. Crispin offers some interesting details about how Fett gathers intelligence and lets us inside his head, where we see his disdain for the fearful masses who shudder at his approach, terrified that they might be his real target.

K.W. Jeter's *Bounty Hunter Wars* trilogy, which appeared in 1998 and 1999, gave Fett a starring role. The series, which jumps back and forth between the years before *A New Hope* and those after *Return of the Jedi*, find Fett trying to survive two fiendish plots. Before *A New Hope*, he is hired by the arachnid Kud'ar Mub'at to join the Bounty Hunters Guild and destroy it from within—an effort engineered by the crime lord Prince Xizor at Emperor Palpatine's behest. After *Return of the Jedi*, fellow bounty hunter Dengar saves Fett from the Sarlacc. Together they must dis-

cover the true identity of Neelah, a young woman whose memory has been erased, and determine how that mystery is linked with the long-ago destruction of the Guild.

Jeter's Fett is cold as space—and supremely calculating. At the heart of *The Mandalorian Armor* is a taut, exciting mission undertaken by Fett, Bossk, IG-88, and Zuckuss against the Shell Hutts of Circumtore. Fett and his fellows are disarmed and ambushed by mercenaries, yet they win the day thanks to a fiendish trap engineered by Fett years before. Readers will also like the shivery D'harhan, a frightening cyborg who boasts a laser cannon instead of a head.

Hard Merchandise, the trilogy's last book, features a tense battle between Fett and a rogue stormtrooper who nearly gets the better of the bounty hunter aboard *Slave I* during a space battle with Xizor's flagship. Fett escapes by crashing his wounded ship into Kud'ar Mub'at's web, setting up a truly creepy, nerve-wracking confrontation between the bounty hunter, Xizor, and the arachnid.

THE SHAPE OF FETT TO COME

If you haven't read those books, they should tide you over until the next tale of the young bounty hunter, *Boba Fett 3: Maze of Deception*. Author Terry Bisson is handing over the reins to Elizabeth Hand, an award-winning author known for such books as *Last Summer at Mars Hill* and *Waking the Moon*. In

Maze of Deception, Boba and Aurra Sing are reluctant comrades on a quest to retrieve Jango Fett's riches, which takes them to Aargau, a banking planet where weapons are illegal. Will the two manage to trust each other long enough to prevail? And can young Boba



MORE FROM THE MAN IN THE MANDALORIAN MASK

Here are some Fett tidbits from other Star Wars fiction:

Tales From Jabba's Palace

Timothy Zahn speaks for the man in the Mandalorian armor in "The Tale of Mara Jade". His oddly chatty Fett even has a polite "Nice to meet you" for the disguised Emperor's Hand.

Shards of Alderaan

Fett is a major character in the second half of the Young Jedi Knights series, penned by Kevin J. Anderson and Rebecca Moesta. In 1997's *Shards* and four books that follow, Fett repeatedly runs up against Zekk, a Jedi student turned wanna-be bounty hunter.

Tales from the New Republic

This 1999 story collection includes Paul Danner's "No Disintegrations, Please," in which Fett takes on an entire Imperial garrison to catch a target who sliced into Jabba's systems.

Galaxy of Fear

This series of kids' books by John Whitman features two Fett cameos. In 1997's *City of the Dead*, he's after Ponda Baba, who got the business end of Ben Kenobi's lightsaber in *A New Hope*. Want to see Fett face off against Yoda? Check out 1998's *The Hunger*.

Jedi Dawn and The Bounty Hunter

These choose-your-own-adventure books were written by Paul Cockburn and published in the United Kingdom by Bantam in 1993. You're Havoc Storm, a would-be Jedi, and you're up against the galaxy's best bounty hunter. Good luck—you're going to need it. And good luck finding these rarer-than-rare books.

And then there's Boba's father. Jango will make an appearance in Ryder Windham's *Jango Fett vs. the Razor Eaters*, the fourth book of new Star Wars series available only from Scholastic's book club for school children. The first book, *The Hunt for the Sun Runner*, should be out by now.

use his knowledge about Count Dooku to his advantage?

You'll find out in April—and find out more as the series continues in October 2003. Given fans' love for the bounty hunter in the battered armor—whatever his age—it's certain that there are many more tales to tell. ☺



STAR WARS GALAXIES UPDATE

TENSIONS RISE ON TATOOINE

Last issue, *Star Wars Insider* gave you a glimpse into the beta test process for *Star Wars Galaxies*—a massively multiplayer online game designed to immerse players in the *Star Wars* universe. To bring this game to the thousands of *Star Wars* fans around the world, LucasArts Entertainment Company and Sony Online Entertainment are hosting regular beta tests that allow a select group of players to provide their feedback about the game.

BLAST 'EM!

While *Star Wars Galaxies* attempts to recreate a living, breathing online universe, complete with peaceful activities like dancing and playing musical instruments, combat will most likely be a cornerstone of the game. Players will spend a great deal of time shooting at creatures, dangerous sentient humanoids, and each other. Because blaster combat is a core feature of the game, the team has integrated it

initiating an attack, and moving while attacking. The parasol, which was invulnerable, was soon enveloped in a storm of blaster bolts.

Because *Star Wars Galaxies* is an online role-playing game, a character's ability to hit a target is determined by a set of underlying rules. This system takes into account the attacker's skills, use of movement, choice of weapons, and physical attributes when calculating whether an attack succeeds. Players can also change postures, moving from standing to kneeling or prone positions. Each posture has a different effect on the character's accuracy and likelihood of being hit by a variety of attacks. While prone, characters are extremely accurate and less likely to be struck by ranged attacks, but they are also far more susceptible to melee assaults—like, say, a Tusken Raider attacking with a gaffi stick. During the beta sessions, players frequently dropped to

one knee or crawled about on their stomachs to change the dynamics of ranged combat.

RANDOM VIOLENCE

Although shooting a parasol was entertaining at first for the testers, it's not likely to be an engaging combat experience for *Star Wars Galaxies* players. Instead, players will battle a wide range of creatures, including everything from small rock mites to giant krayt dragons, and cagey non-player characters (NPCs) like alien pirates and Dathomir witches. To test combat against moving targets, the developers turned on the spawning system, the portion of the game that generates creatures on the fly.

In the final version of the game, the spawning system will create creatures and even dynamic points of interest based on a character's relative combat prowess. But during the early beta tests, the developers allowed the spawning system to spawn a number of Tatooine creatures: eopies, rontos, dewbacks, worts, and squills. As a special surprise for the testers, one evening the development team spawned a giant krayt

into the beta sessions as early as possible to allow ample time for testing and feedback.

Initially, testers were simply given a blaster and a target—in the early tests, a parasol, of all things. This process allowed testing of the very basics of ranged combat: targeting an object,

The development team soon expanded upon the ranged combat beta tests by allowing players to use special moves. An integral part of combat, special moves include maneu-





dragon. The dragon roared, stomped across the desert, and thrashed its head from side-to-side as the players began blasting away at the giant. Players were leveled by the krayt's counter-attacks, proving that the dragon will be one of Tatooine's most fearsome threats.

FOR ALDERAAN!

Much of the combat in *Star Wars Galaxies* will pit players against nasty creatures like squills or rancors, or sentient villains ranging from stormtroopers to Tusken Raiders and pirates. However, the game also offers the opportunity for players to take sides in the Galactic Civil War and battle one another as Imperials or Rebels. This system is known as "player-versus-player" (or PvP) combat. For some players, PvP combat is exciting because human players are often more unpredictable and ingenious than any computer-controlled characters.

On the eve of the first PvP test, the testers arrived on Tatooine, where they found themselves joined by a number of NPCs associated with each faction. Imperial recruiters wearing recognizable Imperial duds stood on one end of a large, sandy valley. On the other side of the valley waited Rebel recruiters dressed in Alliance pilot gear. By briefly conversing with



one of these NPCs, the players could join either side in the Galactic Civil War. Of course, once the valley was filled with Imperials and Rebels, it didn't take long for violence to erupt. Blaster bolts filled the desert air; player characters sprinted across the dunes to get the drop on their enemies, and unlucky Imperials and Rebels collapsed into the sand.

The combat system is not limited simply to shooting at other characters and creatures. The entire combat cycle needs to allow players and their enemies to suffer wounds and eventually die after taking enough damage. For players, death is not the end, however. When players are killed in combat, they regenerate (or "respawn") at cloning facilities located throughout the game world.

When cloning facilities were first introduced into the beta sessions, they were placed close to the action to allow players to continue testing combat and death without interruption. Although this is not a situation that will occur in the final game, the players took full advantage of the cloning facility placement. Imperials encircled the cloning facility, attacking any Rebels that emerged. Some combat also spilled into the cloning facility itself, where Rebels and Imperials held shoot-outs under the soft blue glow of the cloning technology.

EXPLOSIVE SITUATIONS

While blasters and blaster rifles are the dominant weapons in *Star Wars Galaxies*, players will also have access to a variety of other familiar

Star Wars weapons, including vibro weapons and a host of explosives. Introducing grenades produced some of the most memorable *Star Wars Galaxies* test experiences. During one PvP session, players flung CryoBarricade grenades, Imperial detonators, and fragmentation grenades at one another, filling the desert with bright red, blue, and orange explosions. In the final game, different types of grenades will cause different amounts of damage and might also knock enemies to the ground.



MISSION TO ENDOR . . .

Though combat in *Star Wars Galaxies* should be exciting, combat without some kind of context would quickly lose its meaning. Aside from the PvP combat, which is built around the Galactic Civil War, *Star Wars Galaxies* will also allow players to undertake a virtually unlimited number of missions. *Star Wars Insider* will return to the beta sessions to provide a full report on the testers' search for adventure. ☺

CORUSCANT AND THE CORE WORLDS

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE GALAXY



BY DANIEL WALLACE

“Coruscant. The entire planet is one big city.” So said Ric Olié in *The Phantom Menace*, in one of his searingly brilliant observations that have earned him the fan nickname of Captain Obvious. But Olié’s statement conceals an exciting truth, for how could anyone ever be bored on a planet that has everything?

A BRIGHT CENTER

Coruscant is rocking 24/7—think of it as New York City to the nth power—and Wizards of the Coast’s *Coruscant and the Core Worlds* is your Zagat’s guide. From swanky restaurants to sporting arenas to impregnable military strongholds, Coruscant and its cosmopolitan neighbors in the galactic Core have it all—and everything you need to know has been lovingly laid out in the book’s 164 pages. The galaxy’s top

politicians and power brokers all flock to what Luke Skywalker enviously called the “bright center of the universe,” and now you can too.

Coruscant and the Core Worlds is a sourcebook for the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, but it should be of interest even to those who have never picked up a 20-sided die (A.K.A. a d20) in their lives. Expanded Universe devotees have long known that roleplaying game (RPG) guides are a critical part of any *Star Wars* reference library, with some early volumes (like West End Games’ long out-of-print *Dark Empire Sourcebook*) becoming cult classics. *Coruscant and the Core Worlds*—which at over 110,000 words is longer than many novels—gets into the *Star Wars* galaxy like never before, providing a full, Lucasfilm-blessed picture of the “cradle of civilization.” The data is comprehensive yet peppered with neat little details such as the identity of the true owner of *Attack of the Clones*’ Outlander nightclub and a wry observation about why Corellians are such good drinkers.

“West End Games pioneered the idea of ‘Galactic Gazetteers’ detailing various *Star Wars* worlds,” explains design manager Christopher Perkins. “We just took the ball and ran with it. With the exception of Coruscant, each planet description runs about four to six pages, making the book’s contents easy to reference and digest.”



Diehard d20 gamers will be especially pleased with the book, for every page provides a setting for a new RPG adventure and explains how to populate that adventure with new gadgets, vehicles, and starships, new feats and prestige classes, new creatures and alien species, story hooks and adventure ideas, and more than 100 pre-generated supporting characters. Promises Perkins, “Gamemasters will find something useful on every page.”

Coruscant is, of course, the fulcrum of the book, given its importance as the capital of the galaxy and its starring role in two *Star Wars* prequels. But the book also makes a breezy tour through the rest of the Core, running up the alphabetical scale from Alderaan to



Illustration by Jon Foster

Illustration by R.K. Post

Velusia—more than twenty-five worlds in all. Each entry is split into two sections (one for the Gamemaster, the other for the player) and encompasses planetary history during the

major *Star Wars* eras, native flora and fauna, notable locations to visit, and an overview of the indigenous inhabitants and the peculiarities of their culture. *National Geographic* has nothing on this baby.

NEW SPINS ON OLD CLASSICS

Much of *Coruscant and the Core Worlds* is at least superficially familiar. Moviegoers who have seen Episodes I and II probably think they know what Coruscant is all about, and Alderaan and Corellia are familiar from dialogue in the classic trilogy. Other Core Worlds, such as Duro, have previously been explored in comics or books. But no matter how savvy you are concerning the Expanded Universe, if you think you know everything about this galactic hot spot, forget about it.

Coruscant's weighty entry covers a thousand generations of history, from the prehistoric battles between the Taungs and the Zhells to the planet's remarkable transformation in the later years of The New Jedi Order saga—a time when it might be wise for a visitor to refer to the capital as "Yuuzhan'tar." Expect to see Coruscant locales from the familiar (the Jedi Temple) to the obscure (the Ice Crypts), with many appearing in print for the first time. Other entries provide fresh glimpses into established cultures (want to buy a Chandrilan datadagger?) and answer long-standing mysteries. The Z-95 Headhunter starfighter has been part of the *Star Wars* Expanded Universe for decades, but have you ever wonder how it got its name? After visiting Fresia, you may wish you hadn't.



NEVER BEFORE

Great chunks of the Core Worlds systems have been conceived solely for this project and represent a window onto the workings of the Republic

and the Empire. "With this product, we gave the designers a chance to contribute something new to the ever-expanding *Star Wars* galaxy," says Perkins, "as well as surprise long-time fans by introducing worlds they haven't seen before."

You'll visit Anaxes, Defender of the Core, the planet that has long served as the naval protector of Coruscant's prestigious Sector Zero. The geography of Recopia isn't for the acrophobic, since its habitable land is confined to island plateaus that reach up through rolling clouds of poisonous sulfur. Metellos, "the Coruscant that wasn't," is an urban nightmare of overcrowded shacks distinguished by its floating cities of privilege and a mysterious, bottomless Hellwell.

RPG "crunchy bits" get their due, too. In addition to a village's worth of new Gamemaster characters, look for plenty of original content including the terrifying Seyugi Dervish prestige class and several new, Core-specific feats. Your character from Esseles might exhibit a gift for Living History or Bureaucratic Flair, while your Nosaurian hero from New Plympto could be a natural tree-climber after selecting Brachiation.

CAPTURED IN INK

Illustrated throughout with original, full-color artwork, *Coruscant and the Core Worlds* presents an array of visual styles that complement the various silos of information. Each entry starts with a view of the planet from space, with continental contours visible beneath a scrim of clouds. Elsewhere, planetary landscapes depict scenes representative



Illustration by Matthew Hutton

of their worlds, such as a scrap yard on Belgaroth and a Fresian starshipwright factory. "Many of the illustrations have a 'travelogue' feel to them, showing alien vistas and scenes rather than characters and action shots," says Perkins. "My hope is that the scenic illustrations will make readers think, 'Wow, wouldn't it be cool to visit that place?'" Also in the book are maps to serve as RPG aids, and a giant map of the entire Core region spreads across two pages in the book's introduction.

R.K. Post, best known to *Star Wars* fans as the illustrator of *The Essential Guide to Alien Species*, brings his talents to *Coruscant and the Core Worlds* by illustrating all the book's aliens and creatures. Take a gander at the bone-nosed droidbreaker that swallows metal, and the siringana—a creature with scythe-sharp arms that is even deadlier than the Yevethans of its homeworld.

Though the Core has its troublemakers (the smugglers' den of Abregado-rae comes to mind) most of the planets in *Coruscant and the Core Worlds* are like Kuat, Nubla, and Esseles—ultra-sophisticated and dripping with money. That could change if future books continue to document George Lucas' geography. Hints Perkins, "If the book is successful, we would like to focus on other regions of the *Star Wars* galaxy."

We think his eyes were fixed on the frontier when he said it. 🌌

EWOK VILLAGE

BY CHRIS REIFF & CHRISTOPHER TREVAS

YUB, YUB! BRING ON THE GRUB!

It would normally take Yoda's lifetime for a redwood tree to grow to its enormous size, but at Elstree Studios in England, polystyrene facsimiles were built in a fraction of that time. The huge plastic trees would become the location of the Ewok Village on the recently rebuilt Stage 3. This stage had previously suffered a disastrous fire during the filming of *The Shining*, the catastrophe resulted in production delays for *The Empire Strikes Back*, which had been scheduled to take over Stage 3 when Stanley Kubrick's crew was done. So another Lucasfilm production, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, was the first to occupy the stage once it was rebuilt. Long after the Well of the Souls was blown away with the desert sands, a green forest emerged, and the Ewoks moved in.

These furry creatures were portrayed by little people wearing five-piece Ewok suits with full-head masks. Each actor's hands and feet were cast to assure proper fit of their hairy new appendages. The body costume was fitted over a sculpted foam suit that, after several revisions, left the Ewoks with limited mobility to perform. In an early costume test, one actor accidentally sliced the ear right off his Ewok head the first time he brandished his primitive weapon. After more testing, other head modifications were made, this time intentionally. Since the eyes misted up very quickly, holes were drilled near the lenses to improve air circulation. The masks also needed to come off more quickly for relief from the heat, so each was slit up the back. This modification required a wardrobe change for the actors who were all given leather hoods to cover their seams. Originally only a few were supposed to have head gear.

The home of the Ewoks was a village built 20 feet off the stage floor, and it would appear even higher on screen with the aid of matte paintings. Surrounding the entire set was a 360-degree painted cyclorama to simulate a distant forest skyline. Mixed in amid the large false redwoods, smaller live trees and other greenery were brought in to dress the set.

The Ewok Village was the setting for some of the earliest scenes shot for *Return of the Jedi*. Shooting began on Stage 3 in January, 1982 with our heroes rather undignified arrival into the village square. As the scene unfolded, the threat of being devoured by the carnivorous Ewoks proved to be short lived, and the Rebellion gained some unique allies. While the Ewoks prevailed in the movie, the Empire finally wiped out the village when the set was replaced by the Imperial Landing Platform. Only the massive trees remained as the background for this new setting. 🌳



Warwick Davis was the youngest Ewok at age 11 (the oldest was 67). After *Jedi*, Davis starred in other Lucasfilm productions reprising his role as Wicket in the two Ewok movies, playing the title character in *Willow* and four different roles in *The Phantom Menace*, including Wala and Weazel.

The actors portraying Ewoks ranged in height from 2'11" inches to just over 4' tall.

Ben Burtt based the Ewok language on a Mongolian nomadic tribesman dialect called Chalmuk.

The actors and crew were elevated to the two-story-high set via forklift.



The golden C-3PO costume was made from several materials. The main body was fiberglass, and the arms were aluminum, while the head, hands, and feet were all plastic.



Logray, the Ewok shaman, was played by actor Mike Edmonds, who also controlled Jabba the Hutt's tail.

The lightsaber prop Logray waves around is one of several versions of Luke's used in *Return of the Jedi*. It's unique in that it has a painted silver knob near the pommel and a clamp from an antique Graflex camera flashgun like Anakin's lightsaber (given to Luke by Obi-Wan in *A New Hope*), as well as Obi-Wan's.



Nothing smells worse than burnt Wookiee hair. Han learned that the first time he let Chewie try to cook a meal on the *Falcon*.

Luke isn't worried. He has a plan to use the Force to demonstrate Threepio's "magic." If that doesn't work he'll get the crew to run cables from the rafters to "float" Anthony Daniels about the set.



Hanging here, Han now wishes he hadn't given up his trusty blaster. The prop was a replica German C-96 Mauser pistol with a custom made muzzle, scope, and other details.

STRANGE TALES FROM THE STAR WARS FASHION FRONTIER

BY STEVE SANSWEET

VADER IN PLATFORM SHOES, JAWAS DON VINYL,
AND POOR ZAM JUST CAN'T SQUEEZE IN

Holiday gift-giving season is upon us, which means that the gift-getting season is here too! No matter which end you prefer, there are lots of great *Star Wars* goodies out there.

From a single action figure to the Geonosis Arena play set to Hasbro's voice-activated R2-D2, it's all good. Or how about one of those truly incredible Master Replicas Anakin Skywalker FX lightsabers? Once you see it, you have to have it. And if you've been really, really good, maybe someone will buy you the amazing life-sized bronze Yoda by master sculptor Larry Noble. Take a look at *Insider's* gift guide starting on page 70 of this issue for even more ideas.

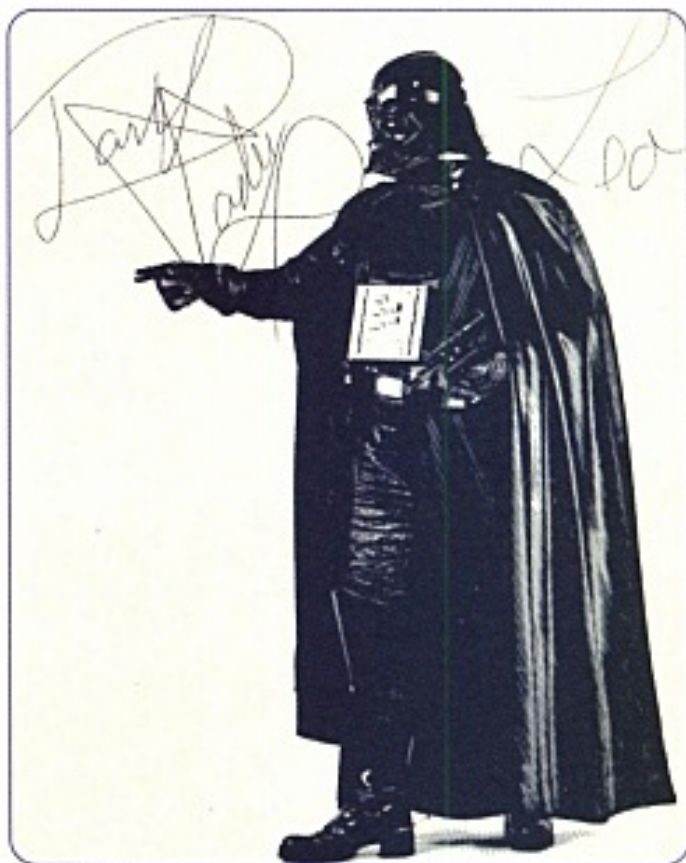
Your questions have truly been flooding in—and really good ones—so I'm pleased that with *Insider's* new schedule, I'll have two more columns a year to answer them.

SECOND-RATE VADER

My neighbor's mother was going through some boxes in storage and found this really odd autographed picture. The costume definitely does not look like a true Vader costume. To me this looks like some sort of publicity photo from the late 1970s or early 1980s. Is this possibly some sort of stunt double or someone who was supposed to play Darth Vader originally? My neighbor does not really care about the value but is definitely curious as to what it really is.

RON MIONE
Las Vegas NV

"Really odd" is an understatement! Darth Vader in platform shoes wearing an inexpensive Halloween mask and carrying a big crate on his chest? I don't think so. When Star Wars soared to unexpected heights, there was great demand all across the world for public appearances by the actors—or at least the characters they portrayed. Since Vader was the villain everyone loved to hate, Lucasfilm made a number of appearance costumes to use at malls, openings, and the like. They were worn by big guys who could fit the costumes, not necessarily by actors. Many times they brought along publicity stiffs that they would sign "Darth Vader." I remember getting one at a Star Wars event at Griffith Park Observatory in Los Angeles. This appears to be the poor man's version of the official shots, perhaps some fan who made a cool costume and was hired by local



merchants to add oomph to an event. Value? Memories of a more innocent time!

OUT OF STOCK

I have never been able to obtain any *Star Wars* in-store displays. I always get the same response: "Sorry, they go to the manager or another employee." But I've finally been able to get some displays thanks a good friend who works at a large retail chain. One large cardboard display is in three sections.

On one side is Obi-Wan, in the middle is the *Star Wars* logo in gold raised for a 3-D effect, and on the other side is Anakin. I also got two smaller cardboard posters. The last thing he gave me is what I feel is the coolest piece in my collection. It is a LEGO diorama of Slave 1 chasing Obi-Wan's Jedi Starfighter through the asteroid field. Any idea on any of their value? My insurance agent won't let me insure them without some form of value verification. Thanks



for your awesome column. You have answered a lot of my questions. But when are you going to allow us to see all of your collection in a book?

TIM DAGGERS
Grand Junction, CO



I love store displays too. Some of them are incredibly cool, either because they're clever or just downright beautiful. They are fairly limited in number and aren't meant to get into the hands of the general public—which is why, of course, we collectors clamor for them. I agree that the LEGO display is one of the great ones, a superb follow-up to a similar display for the Ultimate Collectors' Series X-Wing. In that one, only half of the fighter was built and placed against a mirror to give an illusion of a full craft. For the most part, however, even the coolest display won't top \$100, and most cardboard pieces are more in the range of \$10 to \$35. The Target LEGO display you have has been selling recently on eBay for between \$95 and \$130. The X-wing display is usually around the low end of that range. I'm tickled that you find "Scouting the Galaxy" helpful. As for a book of my collection... well, maybe the Lucasfilm Book Goddess will be reading this!

IT ONCE BELONGED TO CORRAN HORN?

I have been collecting Star Wars figures since I was four years old. I was wondering why Kenner included a yellow lightsaber with not only the original Luke Skywalker in 1978 but also the Bespin Luke a couple of years later, since Luke's sabers in the films were blue.

KRISTOPHER L. GRAHAM
Dawsonville, GA

Creative license? Color-blind toy designers? The Lucasfilm "correctness cops" were out to a long lunch? In truth, Kris, it was done for variety. Toys in that era never pretended to be literal representations of filmic "reality." The first inflatable lightsaber from Kenner was yellow, as was one of The Empire Strikes Back hard-plastic full-sized sabers. But as the Star Wars saga rolled along, Kenner designers kept trying to be as true to the films as possible, and that's why today there are only blue, green, and red lightsabers. Oh yes, and of course, now purple!

A REAL FANATIC

I've bought most of the action figures for Episode II. Would you please list the first sixteen figures that have the scenic backdrop? Also, there are so many wonderful Star Wars collectible items that I hardly know where to start. Over the summer, I bought about \$40 worth of Episode II cards. I cataloged them and noticed that I'm missing four regular, two silver foil, three prismatic foil, and two panoramic foldout cards. How would you recommend I go about filling in the gaps?

JULIE GILBERT
Branchburg, NJ

I'd say you've made a pretty good start, Julie. The first sixteen figures released with the scenic backdrop are numbered from 1 to 16 on the



blister insert. They are, in numerical order: Anakin Skywalker (Outland Peasant Disguise), Padmé Amidala (Arena Escape), Obi-Wan Kenobi (Coruscant Chase), Kit Fisto (Jedi Master), Super Battle Droid, Boba Fett (Kamino Escape), C-3PO (Protocol Droid), Tusken Raider (Female with child), Captain Typho (Padmé's Head of Security), Shaak Ti (Jedi Master), Battle Droid (Arena Battle), Plo Koon (Arena Battle), Jango Fett (Kamino Escape), R2-D2 (Coruscant Sentry), Geonosian Warrior, and Dexter Jettster (Coruscant Informant). They were all fairly easy to find when the figures were first released, except for Dexter, since the decision to discontinue the backdrops was made just as Dex's figure was being packaged.

As for the Topps cards, most dealers these days don't sell individual cards, although I've seen auctions for individual prismatic and panoramic cards on eBay. A better bet is logging onto the Collectors' Connection bulletin board at www.swcards.com, also the best place to get information about new and vintage sets. There's a lot of trading that goes on in the virtual community created by card-lover Cathy Kendrick.



FLEDGLING ARCHIVIST

I recently entered my figure collection into a spreadsheet, and I'm now in the process of taking digital pictures and hot-linking them. This is a daunting task. I would like to take close-up shots of the variations that I have, but I don't always know what the variation is or which one I have.

I love your book, *Star Wars: The Action Figure Archive*. I especially love all of the photos you include of the different variations and what to look for: the smock color on the classic Ugnaughts, for example. It's hard to tell if you have a dark blue smock or a purple smock if you have nothing to compare it to. Your book was wonderful in this and many other regards.

However, the book does not cover the new figures that have come out since its publication. Are you planning on writing a new book covering these new figures? I'm sure I'm not alone in saying that it would be very well received in the collecting community. I know that there are websites out there with pictures of variations, but they don't always have pictures of every variation or explain what the variation is. I'm also an old-fashioned guy and like to browse through books, especially those about *Star Wars* figures, which is my collecting passion. I seem to have an unquenchable thirst for the figures and for information about them.

JEFF PERSON
Norman, OK

Wow, thanks Jeff! I'm blushing as I type this. Here's another one for the Lucasfilm Book Goddess to read. *The Action Figure Archive*



was really a bi-national effort, with my friends Eimei Takeda and Seiji Takahashi doing the first version as a hybrid magazine/book in Japan, and then Josh Ling and I adapting it for the English-speaking audience, with Chronicle Books doing a completely fresh design. I admire what you're doing with your spreadsheet; it's often the organizing, inventorying, and storing of a collection that makes it so interesting. There are no current plans to update the AFA either here or in Japan, but I hope there's the opportunity to do so someday.

MYSTERY JAWA

I have a question that has stumped many people so I turn to you, oh wise one! There is an Australian vinyl cape Jawa on a *The Empire Strikes Back* card that is being offered as the real deal. You can see it on the *Star Wars* Collectors Archive (www.toyr-gus.com). As you can see, the cape is darker, and the bubble on which it appears is different from the version we've all grown accustomed to look for. The explanation—that, since this was a later figure, of course it should have had the different bubble—seems way too neat. Plus, why does it show up only in the last couple of years? So, what gives?

KEVIN A. FOX
New York, NY

Wise one? Hey, just because a guy has graying hair and a salt-and-pepper beard doesn't mean he's an expert on everything—but thanks for the compliment. As you know, the vinyl-cape Jawa was discontinued early in the run in 1978 because Kenner wanted to "dress up" a figure that was smaller than most of the others yet cost the same. Since there are relatively few carded vinyl cape Jawas still around, they command a price in the thousands of dollars, and fake loose ones have flooded the collector market.

But how could such a discontinued figure end up on a Australian Toltoys card for *The Empire Strikes Back*, and with a different bubble than the first version? I've learned in our hobby that even the strangest anomalies—examples that just shouldn't be—sometimes do exist. The Collectors Archive write-up by ace collector Ron Salvatore about Australian collector Ben Sheehan's Empire-carded vinyl cape Jawa (that's Ben's photo we're using, showing a U.S. *Star Wars* Jawa and its Australian ESB counterpart) makes a case for its authenticity. As Ron points out,



"small-head Han Solo figures—a variation that was discontinued in 1978—have turned up on ESB cards dating from 1980." Even though the Australian cape color is darker—like many of the phony non-carded ones—I'm inclined like Ron to think that this is a very strange but legitimate piece.

HAVE YOU TRIED A LUBRICANT?

How did the Zam Wesell speeder ever pass quality control? Try as I might, I can't get Zam or, indeed, any other figure to fit inside. It's impossible! So, it's a beautifully made but severely flawed vehicle!

ED REILLY
Dublin, Ireland

It is a complaint that I have heard before. When rebelscum.com conducted a poll in June, 49% of the 1,682 collectors who answered said that their figures don't fit at all, that they don't fit well, or that only a few figures fit. Some 7% of the respondents said their figures fit fine, but 42% said they wouldn't know because they've never tried. Clearly, key characters should fit their vehicles, but designers have been trying to give many figures an action pose, which works against that. Hasbro is aware of the problem and hinted at Q&A sessions at shows last summer that later versions of specific characters might be made to overcome the problem. And just maybe that's why we're seeing some vehicles released in new packaging with a figure. 🤖

SCOUTING FOR ANSWERS?

Please send your questions and comments about collectibles to: SCOUTING THE GALAXY, P.O. Box 2898, Petaluma, CA 94953-2898. OR you may email them to scouting@palisadepublishing.com, making sure to include YOUR HOME TOWN in the email along with YOUR FULL NAME. Individual replies aren't possible because of time constraints, but we'll answer the questions of broadest interest in the column. Letters are edited for grammar, sense, and length.

BACK ISSUES

Get 'em while they last!



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Christopher Lee, Harrison Ford, Episode II scribe Jonathan Hales.



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Bounty Hunters. Temuera Morrison, Leeanna Walsman, Daniel Logan, Who's Who in the New Jedi Order, Ruma Singh's Convention Diary.



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Joel Edgerton, Bonnie Piesse, Billy Dee Williams, Art of the Star Wars TCG, Fighting 501st Legion.



ISSUE #63
Attack of the Clones DVD, Creatures of Episode II, Elstree Studios, Emissary of the Void V, A New Hope Card Encyclopedia.



ISSUE #6
The Hunt is On! Dengar, Juckus, 4-LOM, heroic combat tactics, Dark Horse comic characters, "Welcome to the Jungle" adventure.



ISSUE #53
Dan McDiarmid, History of Topps Trading Cards, New Essential Guide to Alien Species preview.



ISSUE #59
25th Anniversary Issue. Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford, Peter Mayhew, Who's Who in Rogue Squadron.



ISSUE #2
Pirates and Privateers! Starships of Corellia, Star Wars Roleplaying Game fast-play rules.



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Living on the Fringe! Huge Barty's Landing campaign setting and adventure, starships of the bounty hunters, "Secrets of Mos Eisley," and Jag Fel, fiction from Elaine Cunningham.



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Pamela August, Ben Burtt, Peter Wajpale, Raiders of the Lost Ark 20th Anniversary.



ISSUE #60
Attack of the Clones Issue. Ewan McGregor, Natalie Portman, Hayden Christensen, George Lucas, Droids of Episode II.



ISSUE #3
Droids, Starship combat board game, Darth Bane short story.



ISSUE #8
The New Jedi Order! Spaceport Guide to the Yavin Archipelago, "Hive of the Infidel" and "Topside Infiltration" adventures, "Battle on Boron" by Greg Keyes.



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Who's Who in the Jedi Order, Starships of Episode II, Lightsaber Combat, Emissary of the Void Episode IV, Return to Endor.



ISSUE #5
The Dark Side! Huge fold-out galaxy poster map, pyramid of villainy revealed, secrets of the Sith.



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Attack of the Clones! Complete games guide, "War on Wayland" by Greg Keyes, "Handoff" by Timothy Zahn, Star Wars TCG card encyclopedia, "Jedi's Legacy" solo adventure.

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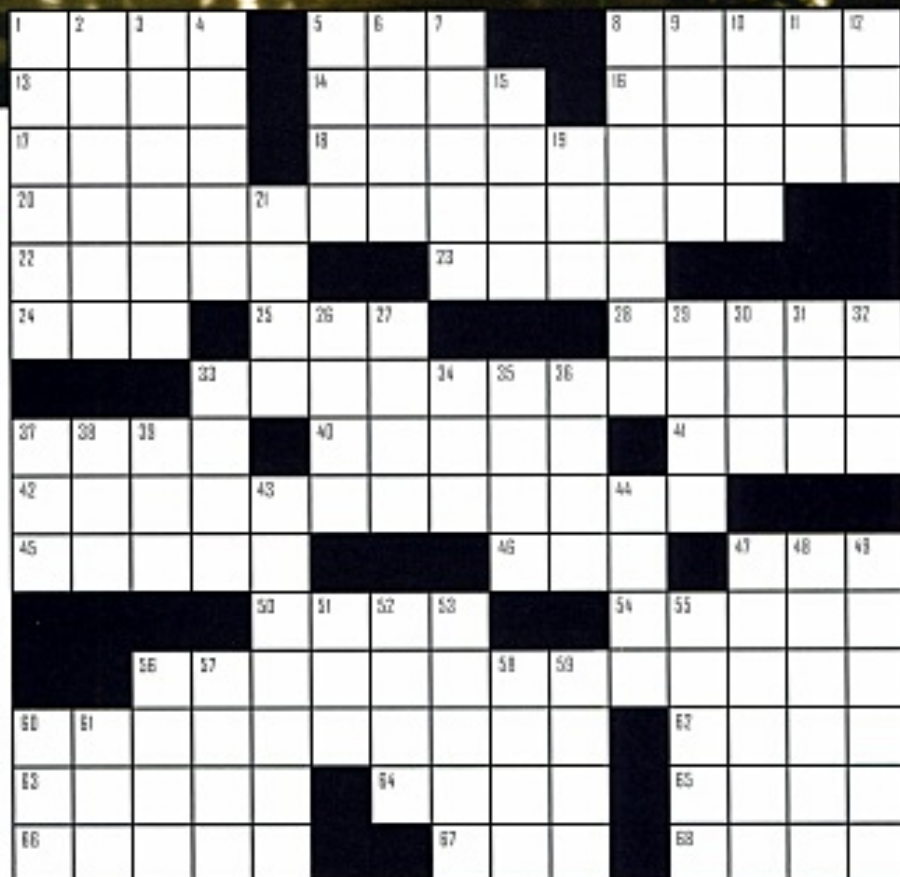
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SATIRE WARS

BY MIKE SELINKER

ACROSS

- 1 What mysocks resemble
5 "Luka, ___ Jedi Tonight" (*Guns & Dogs* parody on *The Simpsons*)
8 Stars of I-Down
13 Farming: Prefix
14 Type of radio
16 Actor Jason of 42-Across
17 One of many built into R2-D2
18 *Star Wars* takeoff featuring Yagurt and Dark Helmet
20 *Star Wars* parody styled after a Kevin Smith film
22 Temporary failing
23 Gilligan's Louise
24 Kai-B's emblem
25 Tiger Woods' league: Abbr.
28 Where to see the Senate debate
33 1977 spoof with Fluke Starbucker
37 Actress Meggie Smith's rank
40 Natalie Portman's mom in *Anywhere but Here*
41 \$1. for one
42 With 56-Across, send-up featuring Fisher, Hamill, and lightsabers
45 Lando Calrissian & the Midwiny of ___
46 Bill Murray sang a *Star Wars* theme parody in this type of lodge
47 Jacuzzi
50 "Catch ___ Felling" (dance hit by Pretty Poison)
54 George ___ in *Love* (parody of a Shakespeare pic)
56 End of 42-Across
60 Spoof program in which Luke calls his "cousin" Mark
62 1970s hit *Coffee, Tea, ___*
63 Loud with feeling, as a crowd
64 It means "fried," in Japanese cuisine
65 Hertz Rent-___
66 Climactic events in *Star Wars* films
67 Reproving word
68 The Treasury is on their backs



DOWN

- 1 ___ for *Ender* (1986 film)
2 Greek markets
3 Tattoo-based satire of C.O.P.S.
4 Key family of The New Jedi Order
5 Dantooine once had a Rebel one
6 Ruler such as Palpatine: Abbr.
7 "Is that ___?" ("Really?")
8 "Everybody's Free (to ___ the Dark Side)" (internet parody of the "Sunscreens" address)
9 "You ___-minded fool!" (Jabba)
10 Athena's birds
11 Kenan's partner, on Nickelodeon
12 Snaky sound
15 U.S. in Roman numerals
19 Night, poetically
21 Sal's rap-mate
26 Ex-senior
27 Appends
29 1970s cop drama
30 Golf score
31 "The Jedi ___ extinct" (Tarkin)
32 Condoleezza Rice's bureau: Abbr.
33 "You ___ me, baby? Hold together!" (Han)
34 Hong Kong action film director Lo ___
35 ___ *Well That Ends Well*
36 Episode II arena creature
37 CD players: Abbr.
38 Ooh and ___
39 "Lady Marmalade" singer for Ewan McGregor's *Moulin Rouge*
43 IV, V, VI, et al.
44 Jewel of the ___ (*Raiders*-esque film)
47 Like survivors from Alderaan
48 Videogame king of the early 1980s
49 Inquisitive sorts
51 Superlative suffix
52 ___-bitsy
53 Unorthodox T.A. on *South Park*
55 571 was one



- 56 The Elks: Abbr.
57 Iridescent gem
58 Mini-marathons: Abbr.
59 ___-E-Mort (*The Simpsons* locale)
60 Its January 1978 cover featured Alfred E. Neuman in Darth Vader's mask
61 Mysterious metal of Thor's hammer

Answers to this puzzle appear on page 34 of this issue.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

taste of things to come, I know the magazine is in good hands. Thank you so much—and don't forget to keep us up to date on the Expanded Universe too!

ROCHELLE M. HAMEL
Tacoma, WA

If our saber dueling article set your kids to fighting, then our work is done—as long as no one puts an eye out. Let's just hope they don't wreck the car after reading this month's "Vehicles of Episode II." Soon we'll follow up with more Expanded Universe goodness, and you won't have to wait long for the

next Star Wars Insider. After last month's bonus issue, we're on a new, six-week schedule. As a subscriber, you'll get your next issue about two weeks early, while newsstand buyers can pick it up around January 21.

WE SHALL CALL HIM MINI-BIES

I am a member of the R2 Builders Club. Some of you may know that we had a room of R2s at Celebration II. For those that got to visit our room that weekend, I would love to personally thank you on behalf of the group. I am



an older member and was lucky enough to bring my R2 to the event. I was amazed to see that many folks actually sat down next to my little overweight glob of grease to get a picture with him. I have seen my little handmade buddy with people I do not even know or have ever met on their websites with Celebration II galleries. Here is one very special picture: my fan-built R2 and his creator, yours truly, "mini-Bies." Hope you enjoy!

May the Force be with you.

KEITH HENRY
Bloomington, IL

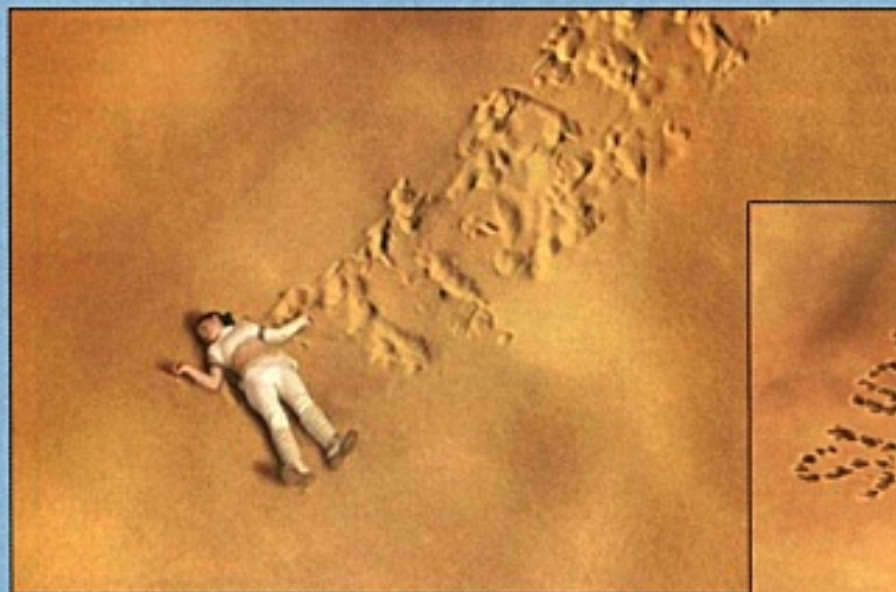
WRITTEN IN SAND?

After watching *Attack of the Clones* several times I think I spotted something interesting. When Padmé falls out of the gunship and rolls down the hill, she leaves a trail in the sand, hardly out of the ordinary. After Obi Wan and Anakin argue about going and getting her and then continue on their mission, when the scene returns to Padmé, as it first starts, look at the trail she left in the sand. The first two times I saw it I could not shake the feeling that something was written there. So, the third I looked extra carefully and lo and behold, it seems that the trail Padmé left in the sand magically turned into 113, as the camera pulls back you can briefly make out a distorted 8—though an 8 it is. Anyway, I have not seen this posted anywhere else and was wondering if I was correct. Keep up the great work. You continue to be my favorite magazine.

TOM MANNING
Dallas, TX



We looked and looked and looked at that scene... and we'll be darned if Tam's not onto something. The 11 seems pretty clear, although the 3 is iffy. We don't see the 8 at all. Even so, the odds of even three of those figures appearing in the sand by accident are approximately 3,720 to 1, and we wouldn't be surprised to learn that there are other subliminal messages hidden throughout the movie.



While those working R2 units are pretty impressive, ILM raised the stakes with the droid factory scene in *Attack of the Clones*. If yours doesn't fly, we're afraid we can't endorse it as an authentic astromech. Nice effort, but please drop us a line when you've got that little fellow in the air.

STAR SIGHTING

Sighting Mr. Lucas in the lobby of a New York theater recently really blew me away. As a young-hearted fan (64 years in November), I could not get over his presence in the Big Apple. For this wizened professor, the experience capped an incredible summer.

It was just after seeing an extraordinary play, *Ovid's Metamorphoses* on Broadway, based on the mythological epic composed by the Latin poet: content relevant to our hero's interests, but we thought he'd be back

at Skywalker Ranch drafting Episode III!

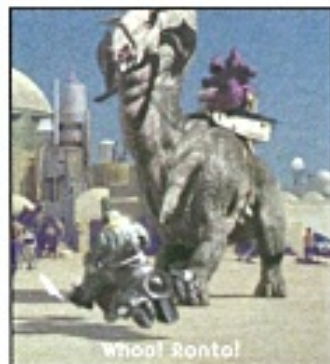
I was too shocked and embarrassed to ask for a photo; he was with a group of friends. But I did ask for and got an autograph—something I shall treasure forever.

RAYMOND CORMIER
Farmville, VA

That's it! We're telling George's producer that he's been gallivanting about New York when he should be hard at work on Episode III.

FAVORITE FIGHT

The Yoda vs. Dooku fight scene was awesome, and if I had to choose a favorite, that would be it. However, Padmé vs. the Nexu was also good, especially since Nute started crying foul. That guy certainly knows how to nurse a grudge! As for favorite creature, I'd have to go with the ronto.



It amazes me how each issue of *Star Wars Insider* seems perfect, and yet I love each one a bit more than the last. Even the ads excite me. I'm definitely going to buy some *Star Wars* checks! The only problem is that I don't have the credits to buy all the wonderful *Star Wars* merchandise advertised.

JULIE GILBERT
Branchburg, NJ

We hope you were sitting down when you opened this issue's holiday gift guide. It's a lofty quest to buy everything, but that's nothing a second and third job couldn't remedy. You are a devoted fan, aren't you?

GIRL THING

Let me start off by saying how big a *Star Wars* fan I am. I have been getting your magazine for a long time, and I have to say that it just keeps getting better and better. Keep up the good work!

I was watching TV the other day and I stumbled across a talk show where two women were about to discuss *Attack of the Clones*. I didn't get more than two minutes into it when one of them said, "Well, I haven't seen any of them, but I'm sure this one



Answers from page 92.

Satisfire Wars

is good." The other woman answered by saying "Yeah, it's just not a girl thing."

I was so disgusted by that comment that I had to turn the TV off. As a female fan of *Star Wars*, I was highly insulted. I love all the *Star Wars* movies, and my favorite part in *Attack of the Clones* was the big battle at the end. I had also heard somewhere else that the boys can see it for the action and the girls can go for the romance. Well, the romance is all well and good, but I loved watching our heroes fighting the arena beasts. People should know that we like the action as much (if not better) than the romance. We female fans need to stick up for ourselves!

ERIN ELLIS
York, ME

STAR WARS INSIDER

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We agree it's silly to assume women like only romance and not the action. In another case of great timing, we received the following letter not long after Erin's:

SENSITIVE GUY

I'm sure I'm the only guy to say this and maybe the only person period, but I'm proud to say my

favorite scene was the romantic picnic Anakin and Padmé shared on Naboo. People seem to hate the love story, but it was shot so wonderfully. The scenery, real or not, was beautiful! The actors were also great. Let's not forget the importance of the romance. It eventually leads to Luke and Leia! Oh, I must not forget the

beautiful music by John Williams. While the whole film was great, this scene sticks out the most from all angles as my favorite.

As for favorite creature, I'd have to say the Kaminoans for what they do as cloners, creating the Republic army. Seeming so graceful and elegant, they create one of the worst fates to the galaxy!

MATTHEW BROJANOWSKI
Queens, NY

You tell 'em, Matthew. Now pass the tissues. We're getting all choked up thinking about the tragic love affair.

BETTER THAN THE NEW PHONE BOOK

First off, I love your magazine! It totally rocks! I freak out when it comes and go yelling, "IT'S HERE! ITS HERE!" causing the rest of my family to think I'm really weird and totally over-obsessive of Star Wars—which I am.

Well, the battle I would have to respect the most is Padmé vs. the Nexu. That's because she hasn't had any battle practice like that. Plus she couldn't use the Force.

And going up against a Nexu unarmed—that took guts.

But the coolest battle would have to be Obi-Wan vs. Jango. That was totally awesome! I was on the edge of my seat going, "Come on, Obi! Get him!" the whole time. It was great!

My favorite creature is the Nexu with its cat-likeness and ferocity. I think it's the toughest creature out there. I can't wait till the next issue comes out!

May the Force be with you!

CAROLINE SCHUMACHER
Orlando, FL

P.S. 979 days 'til Episode III!

He might not be a paragon of integrity, that rascal, but we do admire Obi-Wan's fighting skills. Of course, when you call him "Obi," we picture a young Ron Howard facing off against the deadly bounty hunter. Still, that might be an entertaining fight, if a short one.

Tell us what you think of this issue by emailing insider@palzopublishing.com. While you're online, check out our spiffy new website, www.palzopublishing.com.

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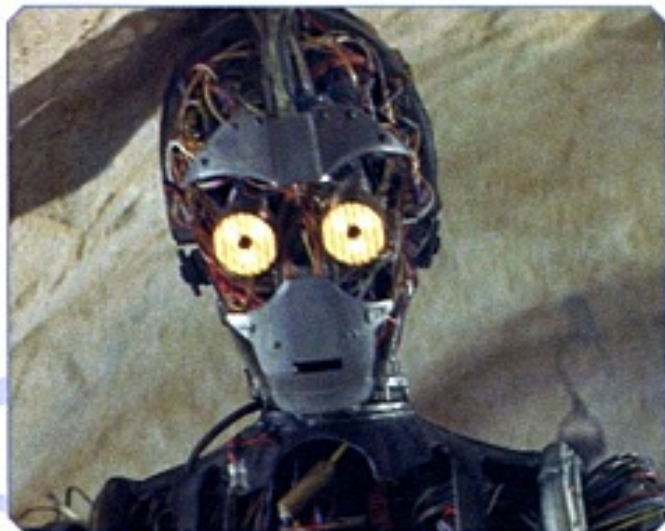
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I certify that all information furnished above is true and complete.

Signature:
Johnny L. Wilson
Publisher

Answers to Your Star Wars Questions

with **Pablo Hidalgo**, Internet Content Provider for starwars.com



In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Leia reaches over and powers down C-3PO from what looks like the left rear of his neck. In *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin powers up Threepio from what looks to be the front right side of his neck. Who moved the on/off switch?

Threepio without his coverings can be thought of as a kit-bashed affair, with non-standardized parts and jury-rigged configurations. His skin, though, is standard Cybot Galactica 3PO unit coverings. The button that activates him in *The Phantom Menace* just dangles in place on the front side of the neck. In order to accommodate the appropriate exterior port on the skinned version, Shmi—who completed Threepio in Anakin's absence—simply lined up the button on the appropriate side.

How come in *The Empire Strikes Back*, Chewbacca has to attach Threepio's head to his torso in order to power it up, but in *Attack of the Clones*, we can see it still powered even though it's been knocked loose from his neck?

Some droids can enter a state called "cyberostasis," which the *Star Wars Encyclopedia* describes as "a function of a protective reflex system." If a droid has enough reaction time, it shuts down when reacting to trauma. You'll note that Threepio saw the attack coming in *Empire*. He apologized for intruding and pleaded for the stormtroopers not to get up. When the blaster fired, Threepio's



reflexes kicked in and shut him down to such an extent that he needed to be rebooted from the main power supply on his back.

Conversely, in *Attack of the Clones*, Threepio never saw that decapitating machinery coming. His system registered a brief interruption in power and system connectivity, but his cognitive unit and head-contained power supply never entered into cyberostasis.

Yesterday I was watching *The Phantom Menace* and I noticed (not for the first time of course) that there are two Hutts shown when Jabba is announced. Who is the one in the back?

That second Hutt is Gardulla, the grotesque "female" gastropod that was once owner of Shmi and Anakin Skywalker. Gardulla is a business rival of sorts to Jabba, and during Boonta Eve was a special guest of the crime lord. (For more on the confusing Hutt genders, see "Q&A," *Star Wars Insider* #58).



In *A New Hope*, why does Luke call R5-D4 an R2 unit?

The same reason we tend to call any cola Coke, any tissue Kleenex, any adhesive bandage Band-Aid, and any photocopy Xerox. When a product is so successful that it becomes synonymous with its generic description, people tend to use it as shorthand. So, while



R5-D4 wasn't an R2 unit, the term "R2 unit" is such a commonly used phrase for astromech droid that everyone knows what it means even if it isn't technically accurate.

Porkins (Red 6) is the first to die at the Battle of Yavin in *A New Hope*. Later in that scene, somebody asks for Red 6, and there's an answer. Why?

While Red Leader does mistakenly ask for Red 6 in the heat of battle, it's not Red 6 who answers. A look at the screenplay informs us that it's Red 10 who has the next line of dialogue. Red 6 never answers because Porkins is, at the time, a larger-than-usual cloud of dust expanding over the Death Star's surface.

So why does Red Leader ask for Red 6? The confusion of combat is an allowable excuse, but there is a behind-the-scenes answer as well. In a previous iteration of the script, Porkins was actually going to be Red 4 (well, Blue 4 if you want to split hairs, but it's the number that's the point here). Another pilot would be Red 6, and not get killed until later, thus allowing Red Leader to ask for Red 6 (or Blue 6). When the script was updated and the numbers were reassigned, that line remained unchanged.

Why does Yoda struggle so much when he lifts the large pillar that would have crushed Obi-Wan in *Attack of the Clones* when in *The Empire Strikes Back*, he claims that size matters not and there is no difference between a small rock and Luke's X-wing?

Man, it takes a lot to impress kids today. Yoda lifts a multi-ton stone and metal pillar, and people are peeved that he breaks a sweat. Seriously, though, it does take effort to lift heavy masses by using the Force. It's not the same kind of effort required to stave off lower back pain when you're hefting furniture around, but rather a kind of meditative, internal cosmic kind of deal called concentration.

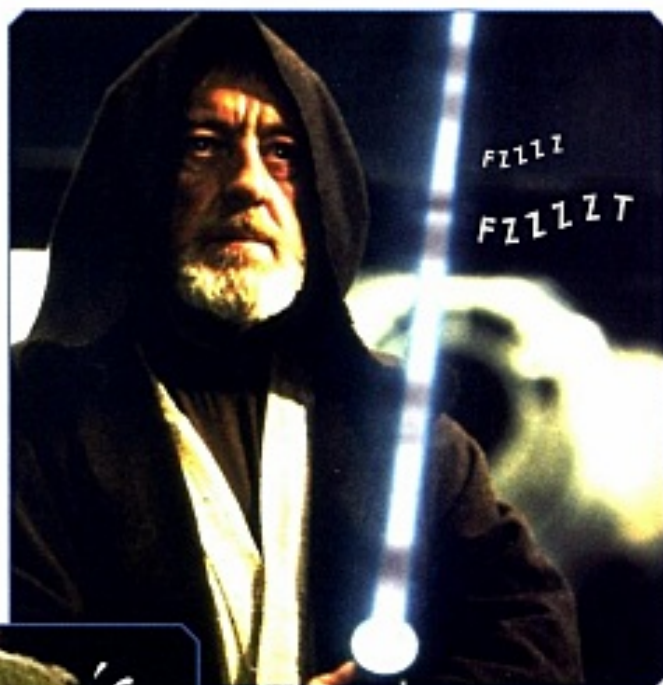
Unfortunately, meditative, internal cosmic kinds of deals don't really read well on the screen, so you have to put in the traditional grunts and the eye-squints to convey that impression. Watch *The Empire Strikes Back* closely. He really worked hard to lift that X-wing. Just like he worked really hard to move that pillar.

For those who can meditate on the Force and open themselves up to the true extent of its power, size truly does not matter. Achieving that kind of transcendental serenity after a kick-butt lightsaber duel, though, isn't exactly easy.

Why does Threepio have a silver leg in the classic trilogy?

Though his polished bronze finish is worthy of a trophy, Threepio, in truth, is made of 100 percent recycled material. Episode II indicates this, since his patchwork coverings show that he was

cobbled together from junk. Though we have yet to see the source of his gold coverings (maybe Episode III?), it's clear that not all his pieces are necessarily replaced at the same time. So, his silver leg is a holdover of his less uniform days.



I have always wondered whether there is something wrong with Obi-Wan's lightsaber in *A New Hope*. It seems to be shorting out during the fight. Is this true?

There was something strange going on with Kenobi's saber, both in the *Star Wars* universe and on the set. As revealed in the previous issue of *Insider* ("Fight Saber"), Darth Vader uses the dangerous red crystals preferred by

the Sith to generate his lightsaber blade. These crystals, when energized by the dark side of the Force, create a stronger blade than those found in Jedi lightsabers, and have a frightening side effect. On occasion, they can break the blade of an opponent's saber by overloading its energy matrix. Obi-Wan's lightsaber is nearly taken out of commission by contact with Vader's weapon.

While this in-universe rationale adds more menace to the saga's dark side foes, production-wise, it's an entirely different story. These days, the lightsaber effects are mostly realized by combining a digitally animated blade with the live action footage. The actor wields a brightly colored aluminum rod that provides no luminescence. During *A New Hope*'s production, the lightsabers were a combination of mechanical and optical effect. There was some attempt to provide the glow on-set, instead of through visual effects. (See "Set Piece: *The Millennium Falcon*" in *Star Wars Insider* #62 for more details about lightsaber effects from Episode IV.)

QUESTIONS?

Do you have a *Star Wars* trivia question that you can't find the answer to? E-mail it to us at QandA@poizopublishing.com or send it to *Star Wars Insider*, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007. Attn: Q&A.



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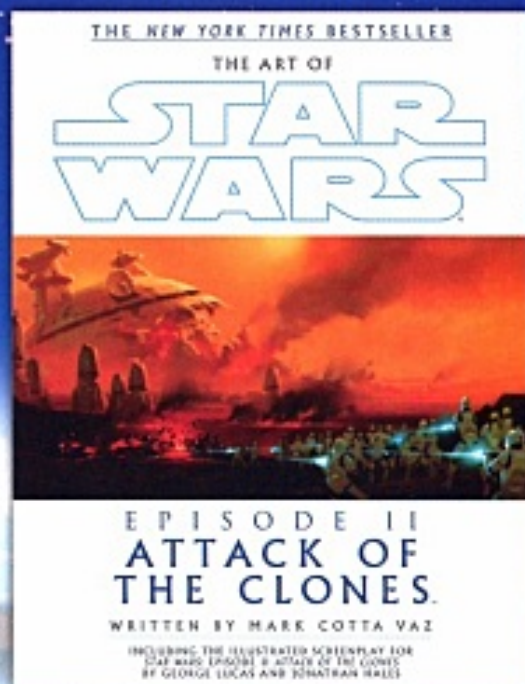
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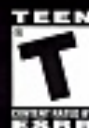
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BANTHA TRACKS



number one
december 2002
by the fans for the fans

IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS THE VIEW FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CHAIR

photo by Vic Wertz



◀ Lisa Stevens, President, Official Star Wars Fan Club

HI there, and welcome to the new *Bantha Tracks*, the newsletter devoted to the most important part of *Star Wars* . . . you! Without fans like you, *Star Wars* would be just another fantasy movie and we wouldn't be looking forward to its sixth installment in 2005.

Imagine living in a remote place like Antarctica, with your videos and DVDs of *Star Wars*, your action figures, books, comics, magazines and other *Star Wars* treasures stacked around you. You have nobody but the penguins to share it with. It would be pretty boring, and chances are your love of *Star Wars* would slip, because the best part of loving *Star Wars* is sharing that experience with other folks like you.

In May, I had the opportunity to share the opening of Episode II with a bunch of my *Star Wars* friends in Las Vegas. We flew in from all over the U.S. to spend five days together celebrating our love of the saga and the opening of a new movie. It was amazing, and I wouldn't have wanted it any other way. Sure, I could have hung around Seattle and seen the movie with a few friends, but in Las Vegas we CELEBRATED *Attack of the Clones* in style! Again, that is what *Star Wars* is all about. Sharing it with your friends.

Bantha Tracks is about your sharing that love with the rest of us. This newsletter is about all of you who are *Star Wars* fans. It isn't about the actors, the directors, the musicians, the set designers, the licensees, or the prop makers who are covered in *Insider*. It is about the folks who have brought *Star Wars* into their lives and have given it a special place there.

We need your help to make *Bantha Tracks* a truly special newsletter. Send in a picture of your *Star Wars* gathering, or of the unique way you showcase your collection. Nominate a truly super fan for special attention, or send a note telling us about a local convention that will feature *Star Wars* content. Mail us your drawing of a favorite *Star Wars* hero (or villain), or just about anything else that would be of interest to other *Star Wars* fans. (See Submission Guidelines on page 8).

Welcome to the party! We plan to have a blast getting to know each other and sharing our love of that galaxy far, far away.

Lisa Stevens
President
The Official Star Wars Fan Club

“Without fans like you, *Star Wars* would be just another fantasy movie.”

Celebration! Not only were *Star Wars* fans the reason for Celebration II, they were also the force behind it. In our first issue we take you backstage at Celebration II with fans who helped make it happen. ▶



photo by Sean Glenn

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STAR WARS CE

photo by Joseph McConold

Fans on the Inside

Celebration II is history. The festival held last May in Indianapolis drew twenty-seven thousand fans to the Indiana Convention Center for three days of *Star Wars* fun. Together they enjoyed stage shows, celebrity appearances, and the Fan Film Festival. They walked, laughed, waited, watched, mingled, and shopped their way through the huge *Star Wars* event.

Some fans, however, spent less time relaxing and a lot more time working over the weekend—backstage, in the autograph area, on the exhibit hall floor, in the Archive Exhibit, and the *Star Wars* Kids' Room. They created spectacular costumes or volunteered their time to produce events for other fans to enjoy. *Star Wars* clubs were busy recruiting new members and sharing their enthusiasm with other organizations.

Maybe you can't imagine spending your next Celebration or other *Star Wars* event working hard behind the scenes. On the other hand, after you read about the experiences and encounters the Celebration volunteers enjoyed, you might change your mind. It's not too early to start planning your involvement in Celebration III. The spring of 2005 will be here before you know it.



▲ Fans attending Celebration II created the buildings for the diorama.



▲ Getting Mos Eisley ready for photographs on Sunday morning.

CELEBRATION II

BANTHA TRACKS

CELEBRATION II COVERAGE

Photo by Jay Ojima



▲ Mos Eisley space port moved to Celebration II last May thanks to fans and the Diorama Builders.

Bringers of Sawdust

The diorama builders

When master diorama builder Frank D'Iorio and his friend Lucie Trudelle showed up at the Indianapolis Convention Center two nights before the opening of Celebration II, they arrived in a van packed full of building materials, including 70 pounds of sawdust.

Why haul 70 pounds of sawdust and a vanload of building materials all the way from Ontario, Canada? The answer was soon obvious—to recreate the wrecked hive of scum and villainy, Mos Eisley, at the Indiana Convention Center.

D'Iorio directed as a group of Star Wars fans constructed a 28' x 8' diorama of Mos Eisley over the course of the three-day weekend. The finished diorama had vessels, ships, action figures, buildings, creatures, and legendary locations like Chalmers' Cantina and Docking Bay 94.

Starting Wednesday night, D'Iorio and Trudelle, with help from local fan group The Indy Knights, painted podiums, assembled materials, and made runs to local hardware and art supply stores. They were ready for the show opening on Friday morning, but D'Iorio reported that construction started slowly.

"By 3:00 P.M. on Friday afternoon we had only two houses built. I was thinking, 'This is going to be a disaster,'" said D'Iorio. "By 4:00 P.M. people were trickling in. By 5:30 P.M. there was no more space at the table! Early on Saturday so many people had worked on buildings that we ran out of plaster bandages (used to adhere sawdust to the buildings). We started using paper mache. People who lived in Indianapolis were bringing in their old newspapers."

"We ran out of plaster bandages. We started using paper mache. People who lived in Indianapolis were bringing in their old newspapers."

Some of the Mos Eisley buildings were not quite dry on Sunday morning. "We all had our little hairdryers out, blowing on the buildings," said D'Iorio, "so they would dry and be ready for photographs and the drawing at noon."

Two lucky fans won the drawing and took home Docking Bay 94 and the Cantina. All the others who worked on the project over the weekend were invited to take home the buildings they helped construct.

Although D'Iorio considers building Star Wars dioramas a hobby, the detail and perfection apparent in his work makes the word "hobby" seem blatantly insufficient. "Passion" seems a much more fitting word. D'Iorio said he and his helpers received many thanks, in particular from parents who were grateful to be introduced to something fun they could do with their kids at home.

D'Iorio and a group of friends sponsored the costs of bringing all the materials to Celebration, and volunteered their time to create some terrific memories for Star Wars fans of all ages.

D'Iorio is always willing to help other Star Wars fans with their diorama projects. Novice and experienced builders alike can check out his website: www.niubnubsuniverse.com. They'll find step-by-step directions on how to build all types of dioramas to display Star Wars action figures and recreate scenes from the films.

"It's the site I wish was there six years ago when I started building dioramas," said D'Iorio.

Not only is D'Iorio a master diorama builder, he is also a member of the Official Star Wars Fan Club.

Go to www.niubnubsuniverse.com for step-by-step directions and photographs on how to build your own dioramas to display your action figures and vehicles.

Backstage Story

Fans in the wings

Volunteers were the grease that kept the giant machine of Celebration II running smoothly. They gave up hours of their weekend to move stage props and cables, help celebrities and guests find the stage, and sometimes help the MCs themselves find the celebrities and guests! Volunteers worked in the Star Wars Kids' Room, set up the Archive Exhibit, and managed queues in the Convention Center. Although not as obvious as the 501st Legion, resplendent in stormtrooper gear, all the volunteers were vital to Celebration II's success.

The combined efforts of the volunteers moved mountains, but often the spirit of their work—and the excitement—could be captured in small snapshots of their Celebration II memories.

"My favorite volunteering moment was working in the Archive Exhibit. I and another volunteer were standing there, wearing our little white archiving gloves, and feeling rather overwhelmed by these incredibly gorgeous costumes and props," said volunteer Chris Cassidy. "Suddenly Susan Copley, the archivist from Lucasfilm, said 'Why don't you two start undressing Anakin?' 'Life's rough,' I thought."

One volunteer had the right idea at the right time, so she helped a star to see what Celebration II had to offer.

"Saturday afternoon, I was working backstage at Celebration II while Hayden Christensen was there," said Debby Drago. "Steve Sansweet asked Hayden if he had been out to the con floor yet, and Hayden just gave him this look that said, 'What do you think?' I quietly said 'stormtrooper armor.' They both paused, looked at me, smiled, and then went on their way."



"Daniel Logan conveyed to me that he loved Star Wars and that he was thrilled to be at Celebration. He reminded me that I was too!"

Christensen and his brother Tav did don stormtrooper helmets that day, which gave them a chance to roam the Convention Center and take in the Celebration sights.

Stage volunteer Trish Gibbs showed up for her first morning at Celebration "a little worse for wear" from celebrating with other Star Wars fans the night before. She waited backstage for her duties, tired, a bit cranky, and perhaps wondering why she agreed to give up her Celebration time to volunteer.

"I was suddenly startled by a teenager who burst through the stage curtain offering an energetic, 'G'Day!' He bounded up and asked how I was, said that he was great and having a fabulous time," said Gibbs. "He quickly exited backstage before I could muster a response. In that short interlude, however, Daniel Logan conveyed to me that he loved Star Wars and that he was thrilled to be at the Celebration. He reminded me that I was too!"

Volunteer Brian Lew recalled his favorite Celebration memory. "During the pre-show setup on Friday, they showed the Spider-Man / Yoda parody trailer and I was stunned. It was the first time I'd seen badass Yoda. There was some back-and-forth as to whether the footage should be shown so far in advance of EPT's release, but thankfully it was given the green light. After the footage ran, the two thousand or so fans in the room jumped to their feet, gave it a standing ovation, and started chanting 'Yoda! Yoda!' I can honestly say I got chills up and down my spine."

Events at Celebration II, like the Yoda/Spider-Man "trailer" gave fans chills, but do fans ever give the stars a reason to cheer? According to Denise Clarkston, they do. Clarkston volunteered with the thirty-five autograph celebrities who attended Celebration II with C2 Ventures.

"The group of autograph guests was pretty quiet as they rode the bus to the event that first morning—until we caught our first glimpse of the convention center. There were the lines of fans, wrapped around the building, waiting for Celebration II to begin. I heard a collective intake of breath, followed by gasps of 'Wow! Oh my God. This is amazing!' After the initial shock wore off, everyone started clapping, shouting, and cheering."



►► Celebration II—fun for fans of all persuasions.

Rockin' Rollin' Droids

R2-D2 Builders Thrilled celebration crowds

They came from everywhere, driving all night, cars packed with Artoo units, mouse droids, spare parts, and a "naked" C-3PO. They traveled from Texas, from Illinois, California and Colorado. Droid spare parts even flew in from Australia.

Some of the Artoo units were fashioned from PVC tubing, and others were made of metal. Some were aluminum, fiberglass, plastic, or resin. But they all looked just like R2-D2.

The R2-D2 Builders' Group brought their hand-crafted droids together for the weekend of Celebration II, setting up shop to share their love of building with other Star Wars fans. Over the course of the weekend, fans flocked to the room to see the group's high-quality demonstrations and construction examples, and of course to see the completed droids. Nine Artoo units, three mouse droids, a Jawa, and a C-3PO were on display.

"Words really can't express what I felt every time a little boy or girl would run up and say 'hi' to one of our Artoos," said Jason Smith, who played a key role coordinating the group's Celebration efforts. "The smiles on their faces definitely made it worthwhile. To them they were seeing the real R2-D2, and they would remember it the rest of their lives."



▲ R2-D2 Builders group on parade with their Artoo units at Celebration II... or was that Coruscant?

[LEFT TO RIGHT] photos by Terry Peacock, Michael Miconelli, and Sean Glenn

photo by Gavin Rees; Coruscant effect by Dave Buckley

Dave Everett, an Australian robotics engineer, started the R2-D2 Builders' Group in 1999 as an online resource for fellow fans interested in building the famous droid. The group shares information and building tips with each other, and according to members, their combined knowledge has made a huge difference in the finished products.

"When I joined the group in 2001, many of us were using bad resin parts to build our droids," said member Kelly Krider. "Now we use aluminum and high-quality machined parts."

The Builders were a first-rate attraction at Celebration II. Their display room was entirely fan-designed, and it looked completely professional. They also became part of the weekend in ways they did not expect. "Naked" C-3PO and his builder, Craig Smith, joined the real Threepio, Anthony Daniels on stage for a little droid chatter. A mouse droid and an Artoo unit helped one Star Wars fan propose to his girlfriend, delivering notes and letters to prepare her for the final proposal. *Bantha Tracks* heard she accepted.

"Anthony Daniels stopped by, as well as Ben Burtt and Daniel Logan," said Smith. "Don Bies even brought the real Artoo in for a visit... that was pretty cool!"

Bies, an ILM model maker, R2-D2 operating veteran, and Droid Unit Supervisor for *Attack of*



"I'd been a model builder for years. One day it dawned on me. 'Why don't I build the ultimate model—R2-D2?'"

◀ Craig Smith's creation and Anthony Daniels discussed which was the "real" Threepio.

the Clones, dropped in on the builders a number of times over the weekend, and he even attended their private "droid summit" on Friday night. Bies shared tips for better droid operation, including "how to run the remote control behind your back."

Bies was the Guest of Honor for the Builders' R2-D2 parade Sunday through the upper level of the Convention Center. Kids of all ages lined up outside the Builders' room Sunday, waiting for the droids to appear and the parade to start.

The Builders carried much across the country to share with other fans at Celebration II, but what did they carry home with them?

"I have been a Star Wars fan for as long as I can remember, but never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would be involved in something so incredibly huge as Celebration II," said Smith. "It was one of the highlights of my life."

"I won't forget how much fun it was to meet the other Builders who I've been talking to online for so long," said Krider. "Having Don Bies as the Grand Marshall for our parade was a real highlight. And I'll never forget the faces of all the fans when they saw our droids."

Star Wars Fan Groups Shine at Celebration II

Celebration II offered an exhibit hall of sorts just for clubs and organizations who wanted to share their group with other fans at the event. To exhibit in the Fan Club Room, Star Wars groups from all over the United States wrote résumés describing how their clubs not only produced events for themselves but also how they were involved in both home and online communities.

The groups selected for the Fan Club Room were:

The 501st Legion. Probably the most widely recognized Star Wars fan club going, the 501st was a real working presence at Celebration II. At their Celebration booth, they handed out flyers and information cards, and automatically signed up anyone who showed up in Imperial costume.

The Rebel Legion. The Legion's mission statement is to "engage in costuming in the spirit of fan fellowship and spread Star Wars costuming into the Mundane Universe." The Rebel Legion also signed up anyone who appeared in costume—"good-guy" costumes of course. Actors and audience alike enjoyed the Legion-provided fully-costumed escort for the actors who portrayed Rebel pilots in the original trilogy.

From Bricks to Bothans. Celebration II attendees who visited the group's area in the Fan Club Room enjoyed life-sized sculptures of Star Wars characters made of LEGO bricks donated by members of the group. From Bricks to Bothans hosted free random drawings for LEGO sets and offered an open LEGO construction area.

The **Pennsylvania Star Wars Collecting Society (PSWCS)** displayed portfolios of custom figures and member-created items at their booth, and they shared information on the different types of Star Wars collecting. The group offers an e-mail list, website, and monthly meetings to help their membership share their love of Star Wars collecting.

The **Chicago Force** emphasized interaction with other clubs at their Celebration booth, sharing their helpful handbook on how to start a local Star Wars club. The group, started in 1999 during the line-up for *The Phantom Menace*, has been dedi-



cated to organizing charity drives and other activities in their area for Star Wars fans and "sci-fi fans of all stripes."

The **Ohio Star Wars Collectors' Club** celebrated its fifth anniversary at Celebration II. The club's main goals are to create a friendly buying, selling, and trading environment, and help collectors in Ohio communicate with each other. At Celebration II they displayed pieces from their own collections and answered visitor questions about collecting Star Wars memorabilia.

StarWarsFan.org started out as a Star Wars club dedicated to communicating through "snail mail" and newsletters before moving on to be a popular fan site on the Internet. The StarWarsFan.org group helped coordinate fan gatherings in Indianapolis. They gave away flyers and promotional items at their booth, but focused on fans meeting fans and enjoying their mutual love of the Star Wars galaxy.

FanForce.net was a perfect fit for the Celebration II Fan Club room. Online, the group helps coordinate fan club gatherings everywhere, encouraging Star Wars fans to meet for special events. The Fan Club room at Celebration II offered the group an opportunity to get the word out about organized fan fun.

A local club, the **Indy Knights**, were busy volunteering before, during, and after the event. The club includes special interest sub-groups such as a book group, props and costumes group, collecting club, roleplaying group, creative writing and art club, and figure customization and diorama building group. The Indy Knights used the Fan Club Room at Celebration II as a way to meet other fan groups, answer questions about Indianapolis, and coordinate their many volunteer activities for the weekend.

Dancin' in the Death Star

Star Wars fans living in the eastern United States will want to make plans to catch *Star Wars: The Musical Edition* appearing live on stage this January and February.

The MIT Musical Theatre Guild (MTG) will perform their musical parody of the *Star Wars* saga set to the tunes of popular Broadway songs. Luke, Leia, Han, Vader, Obi-Wan, and other beloved *Star Wars* characters will perform in a libretto based on the story of *Star Wars: A New Hope*.

The first run of *Star Wars: The Musical Edition* will cover the fourth chapter in the saga, but fans could have more parody and fun to look forward to from MTG. Lyricists Rogue Shindler and Jeff Suess, and musical director Steven Peters, all long-time *Star Wars* fans, have written a Musical Edition that encompasses the entire Classic Trilogy.

What: *Star Wars: The Musical Edition*

Where: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA (Only 180 seats per show. Get your tickets now!)

Who: MIT's Musical Theatre Guild, a community theatre group run by MIT students

When: 6 shows; January 31, February 1-2, and February 6-8

How much? \$9 General Admission; \$6 MIT students; \$8 students, seniors, and MIT faculty/staff

More info & ticket reservations: Call MIT Musical Theatre Guild at 617-253-6294 or visit web.mit.edu/~mtg.

Thanks to Rogue Shindler, member of MTG and of the Official *Star Wars* Fan Club.

STAR
MUSICAL
EDITION
WARS

Bantha Tracks Submission guidelines: Any original art, envelope art, comics, illustrations, news, stories, meeting information, or any materials voluntarily submitted become the property of Bantha Tracks. No compensation will be given for voluntary submissions, and there is no guarantee of publication. Submissions to Bantha Tracks will not be returned. Each submission must include the creator's name, Official *Star Wars* Fan Club membership number, age, contact information, date the work was created, and a statement that the work is original, created by the person submitting it. Send Electronic files to banthatracks@palzopublishing.com, or send your snail mail to: Bantha Tracks, c/o Palzo Publishing, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110; Bellevue, WA 98007. If you have any questions on these guidelines please email banthatracks@palzopublishing.com.



Spam from A Galaxy Far, Far Away...

A galactic chain letter from Aaron Allston

Read this letter and then send it to ten people. If you do, great luck will befall you, and your dreams will come true. If you send it only to a few people, some luck will come your way, but it will not be all it's cracked up to be. If you just ignore this letter, bad luck will destroy you.

CASE ONE:

Take the case of **Senator P** from Naboo. **P**'s only dream in life was to rule the galaxy, but a LOT of people want to do that.

P received this letter as one of the hundreds of communications that crossed his desk every day. But he read it, understood its importance, and sent it off to all his friends. That left nine copies still to send, so he made a special effort to forward it to other people he had met during his long career.

Because he did what he was supposed to do, **Senator P** got the job of his dreams. But of the people he sent the letter to, most failed to send it on, and evil befell them. **Senator B** of Alderaan died in a mysterious explosion. **Admiral O** died in a mysterious choking incident. **Admiral P** died when a small spacecraft mysteriously crashed through his picture window.

So **Senator P** counted himself very lucky that he forwarded the letter, even to people who weren't close friends.



CASE TWO:

Then there's **Luke S.** from Tatooine. He grew up without a father, and throughout his life his greatest wish was to get to know more about his dad.

Luke S. was in training on Dagobah when he got this letter. A smart young man, he immediately began forwarding it to everyone he knew. But he was interrupted by a premonition of doom. He ran off to save his friends without sending out all his mail.

Because he sent out some letters, good luck came to him. On Bespin, he met his father, who

was miraculously not dead after all. But because he hadn't sent out ALL his letters, tragedy struck **Luke S.** He and his father quarreled, and his father chopped off his hand in a fit of pique. It was months before they reconciled... and his father died immediately afterward.

CASE THREE:

Finally, there's **Grand Moff**. He was a brilliant military officer and visionary—so good that he thought that luck had no place in his life.

One day his aide came to him. "Sir, there's an important letter in your queue," he said. "I've analyzed it and I think it could bring you the luck you need in dealing with the Rebels."

"Delete it," **T** said.

"Yes, sir," the aide said. In a minute, he was back with news about the Rebels. "I've analyzed their attack, sir, and there is a danger. Should I have your ship standing by?"

"Evacuate?" said **T**. "In our moment of triumph? I think you overestimate their chances."

Minutes later, **T** died in a mysterious Rebel incident.

THE LETTER:

It's okay to compete for the attentions of a pretty girl, but not if she's your sister.

If you don't have a good personality, cultivate an interesting look. Then you're sure to get an action figure made in your likeness.

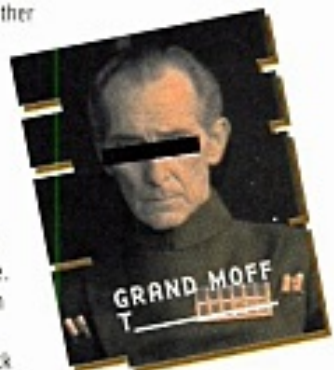
If you have a prehensile tongue a meter long, there are better things to do with it than steal fruit.

If you can change your appearance at will, a good time to do that is when Jedi are chasing you.

Pay attention to people in the background in crowded places. Sometimes they come from different galaxies, and that's pretty cool.

Being strong in the Force is good, but being short and cute and green is sometimes even more powerful.

Don't cut off your son's hand. Don't cut off your father's hand. Don't cut off your learner's learner's learner's arm. But if you're in trouble in a bar, it's all right to cut off somebody's arm.



Aaron Allston is the author of *Star Wars: Wrath Squadron* and other X-Wing books. His latest works for LucasBooks are *Behind Enemy Lines: Rebel Dream* and *Rebel Stand*. Allston is also a member of the Official *Star Wars* Fan Club.

What binds the *Star Wars* galaxy together?

The force... the force of *star wars* fans.

If you're reading *Bantha Tracks*, chances are good you have a collection of colorful memories from your time spent in the *Star Wars* universe. A few of you might even remember the thrill of receiving your very first *Star Wars* Fan Club newsletter years ago. *Bantha Tracks* was first published by Lucasfilm, and it kept fans on the inside track from 1978 until 1987.

Like the old *Tracks*, we are a *Star Wars* newsletter written specifically with fans in mind. In the new *Bantha Tracks* we will also offer you and your friends a chance to be the stars. We'll preview what's coming up in fandom and feature stories about what you're doing now.

In these pages you'll see yourselves, your friends, and other *Star Wars* fans you just might meet some day. We'll also serve up exclusives from fans who are a little more famous—like this issue's "galactic chain letter" from popular *Star Wars* author Aaron Allston.

And the best part? You don't have to wait for us to come to you to get involved. Contact *Bantha Tracks* and send us:

Original Comics and Cartoons: We're looking for fans who are creative and funny. Submit your original *Star Wars* strips and panels involving existing characters in the *Star Wars* universe.

Envelope Art: Send us good-looking mail and you might see your envelope featured in a future issue.

Fan Gatherings: Tell *Star Wars* fans where the next party will be—whether it's a full blown convention or a local fan club event.

Fan Art: Send us your original *Star Wars* creations—electronic files preferred. Again, use existing *Star Wars* characters.

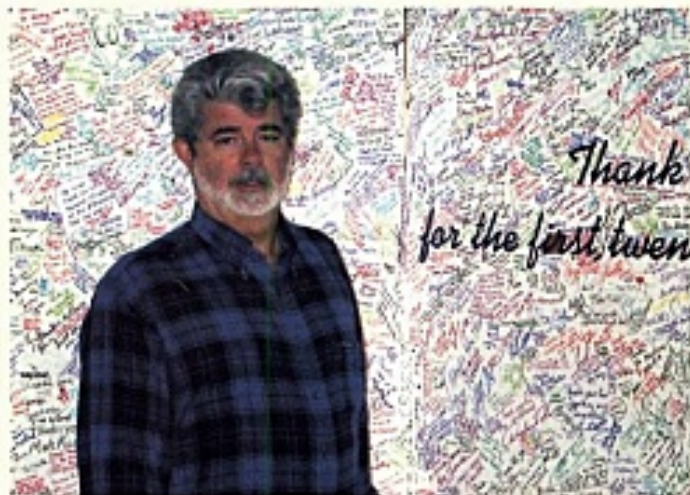
Club Meetings: Local *Star Wars* meeting? You might get the word out in *Bantha Tracks*!

Before mailing or emailing submissions to *Bantha Tracks*, please read our Submission Guidelines on page 8.

As a fan who received her first Official *Star Wars* Fan Club membership kit and *Bantha Tracks* a long time ago, I feel privileged and a little humbled to be editing this edition. I've been fortunate to meet many *Star Wars* fans through the years whom I am honored to call friends. This is for you. Or, more accurately, this is for us.

Get in the Track!

Mary Franklin
Mary Franklin
Editor, *Bantha Tracks*



photos by Tino Mills

Celebration Fans Say Thanks

Star Wars writer/director George Lucas read good wishes from thousands of fans who paused to pen their thanks on a larger-than-life card at Celebration II. Created and donated by a local fan group, the Indy Knights, the card attracted the attention of many at the event. Eventually, it attracted the attention of George Lucas himself, after the card traveled from Indianapolis to its new home at Skywalker Ranch.

A few of the inscriptions:

"George: Thank you for a great childhood and a great adulthood. Looking forward to a great seniorhood!"

"You have changed more lives than you can possibly imagine."

"6 movies aren't enough!"

"Thanks for giving our dreams life."

"When can I be a stormtrooper?"

And of course...

"25 more years, please!" 🍌



Any fan gathering is a good place to celebrate *Star Wars*, whether it's a bash like Celebration II, or a small local event. Get the word out to your fellow fans in *Bantha Tracks*. Email specifics to banthatracks@palzopublishing.com, or write *Bantha Tracks*, c/o Palzo Publishing, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007. Send the name of the group, dates and times of the event, location, and any special considerations or discounts that might be available for fan club members. Don't forget that *Bantha Tracks* is published quarterly, so get your news in early. For more specific submission information see Submission Guidelines on Page 8 of this issue of *Bantha Tracks*.



photo by Michael Mikaelson

Reading someone else's *Bantha Tracks*? Subscribe and get your own copy. Those who subscribe to 8 issues of *Star Wars Insider* will also receive *Bantha Tracks*, mailed quarterly with the *Insider*, and an Official *Star Wars* Fan Club membership kit. To subscribe go to www.palzopublishing.com, or call 1(800) 692-3836.

coming in the next *Bantha Tracks*...
Star Wars Costume Spectacular!

MUCH *Star Wars* costume coverage—coming in the February issue of *Bantha Tracks*!

Don't miss some of the best fan creations of 2002—from Celebration II, to GenCon, ComicCon, and more. The Costume Spectacular will be in the second issue of *Bantha Tracks*, shipping to *Insider* subscribers starting in mid-January.

EXCLUSIVE *STAR WARS* FAN CLUB EDITION!

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FANS
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THE RETURN OF
BANTHA TRACKS